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June 1992

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How Does *Street Fighter II* for the SNES Compare to the Coin-Op? We'll Tell You in Our Detailed Review

Comic Book Heroes Tackle Crime on Screen

ARCADE SHOW REPORT— WHAT'S NEW AND IMPROVED?

MAPS AND TIPS:
***Might & Magic*, Part I**



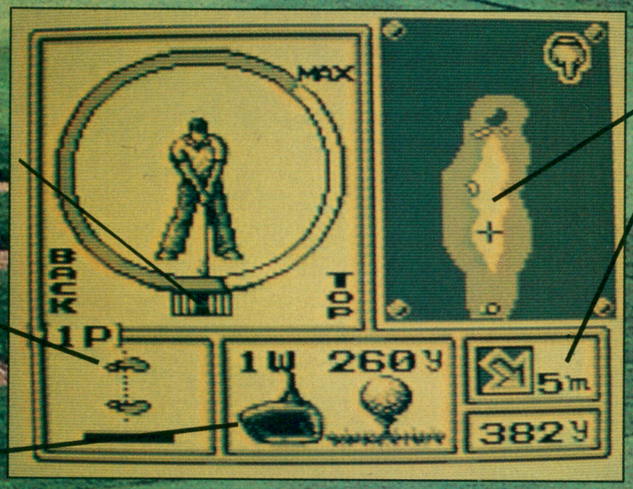
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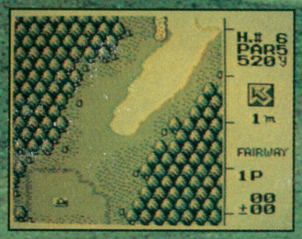
Adjust your stance to hit a draw or fade.

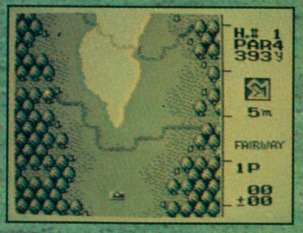
Select your club or use the computer's recommendation.

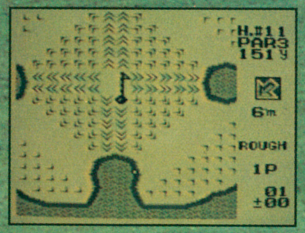


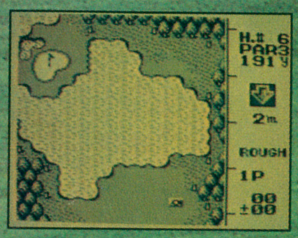
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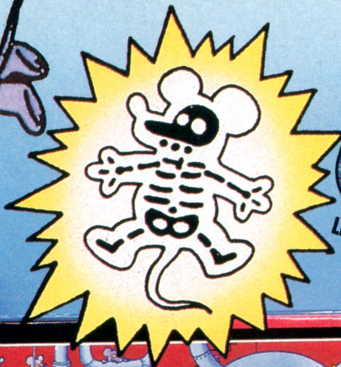
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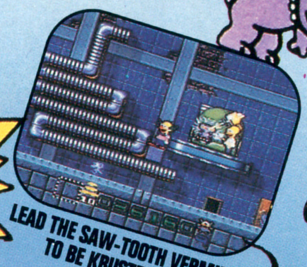
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MATT GROENING

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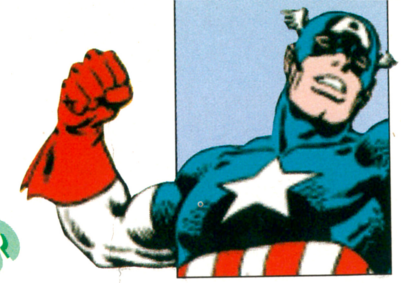
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Cover: Capcom's *Street Fighter II: The World Warrior* for the Super NES has finally arrived. Turn to page 36 and see how the largest game ever created for the Super NES compares to its coin-op big brother.

Cover Art: Mike Wepplo

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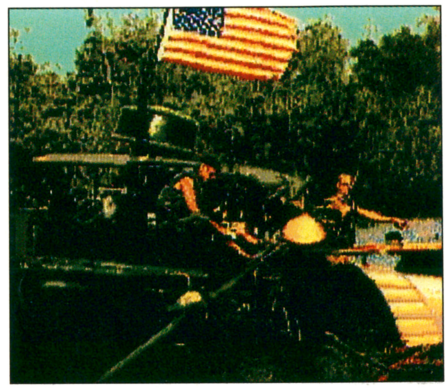
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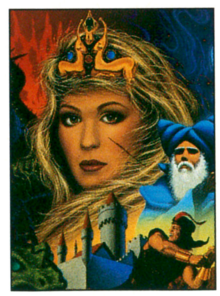
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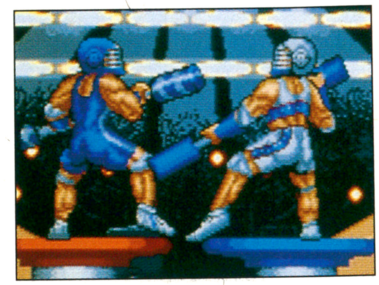
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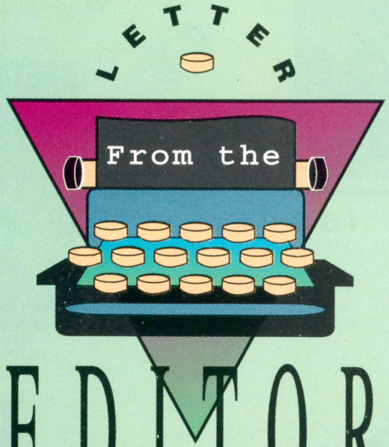
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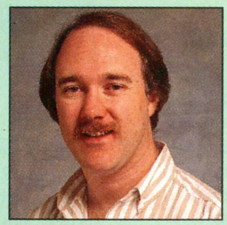
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EDITOR

Boy, when we make changes at VG&CE, things really change! If you take a look at this page next month, you'll see some subtle changes to the left. First and foremost, this is the last issue that Donn Nauert will be working on the staff of VG&CE; but you won't be missing him from the video-gaming scene. He'll be taking a job at Acclaim to work in its game-development division. You'll no doubt see his name scroll by in the credits when you complete a game.



Donn's contribution to both VG&CE and TURBO-PLAY will be missed, but, of course, we can't roll over and die; we must move on. So taking Donn's place is a familiar name, Chris Bieniek. Chris has been reviewing games and writing articles for VG&CE and TURBOPLAY for quite some time. With that behind him, I'm sure he'll jump right into the fray with both feet—a contribution that will make both magazines stronger.

Also leaving us with this issue is Tammie Cushman, our editorial assistant. We welcome phone calls and correspondence, and Tammie was always there to help people out with their requests. She, too, is moving on to bigger and better things. Taking Tammie's place will be Stephanie DeGhuee, who comes to us from the fast-paced world of entertainment. It will take her a while to get used to us slowpokes, but I think it will work out.

Finally in the change department, and to expand on a letter from our *Reader Mail* section this month, you'll be seeing additional coverage on the Neo•Geo in the pages of VG&CE. Previously, it was impossible to cover anything more than the arcade system (which we've been doing in the *Destination Arcadia* column since the machine was released) because the home cartridges weren't available in time for review. We felt it wasn't worth taking the space in the magazine to review a cartridge that was already on the market. Thanks to the graciousness of SNK, who, like us, was interested in getting the home versions reviewed, we've received one of its stand-up arcade machines for our office. That enables us to look at the games before they are released to the stores. Getting early looks at the games lets us put reviews in the magazine. All you people who wrote letters asking for more Neo•Geo coverage, your wish is our command!

As the old song goes: "Oh, the times they are a changin'." If you have any suggestions, advice or criticism, don't hesitate to drop us a line at the address to the left. This is your magazine—we're just here to put it together for you. And as we've said before, thanks for reading VG&CE.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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Next time you're faced with endless hours of Aunt Emma in your face, remember to bring your Game Boy and Jaleco games. Don't leave home without them!



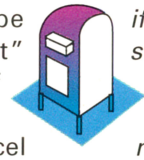
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AT LEAST IT'S NOT PONY EXPRESS

Dear VG&CE:

I really enjoy VG&CE, except for one major thing. That one thing is subscription delivery. No, *most* of the time VG&CE arrives on time (it has been up to three weeks late, but that's not what I'm crying about), but it arrives MANGLED! I realize that it's a problem with the good ol' U.S. Postal Service, but another video-game magazine ships theirs in a sealed plastic bag, and it arrives in mint condition. My March VG&CE issue arrived today, and I *think* the cover looks cool, but I can't tell because it is all torn up. I know it would cost more to ship it wrapped; I know it would be extra "politically incorrect" plastic to throw away, but if my mag is torn up, I will just have to throw it out and cancel my subscription. This is not a threat, but a plea. Please look into it.



If you don't believe me, or you think it's an isolated case, print this letter or ask if anybody is having subscription problems in your *Letter From the Editor* section, and see what kind of response it gets.

Thank you for your time.

—Dave Whittle
Knoxville, Tennessee

Dave, we're sorry that you're having delivery problems, but that's how it must be treated: as a delivery problem. Give your local post office a call and tell them that you are getting your magazine in tattered condition. Though the problem might not be local, they can send word down the line between our sending P.O. and your local P.O. to see if it can't be fixed. The same should be done if you are getting your magazine later. You should get VG&CE delivered to your home (within the U.S.) somewhere near the tenth of the month before the cover date. That means this magazine should get to your home around May 10.

It is very expensive to deliver a magazine through the mail in a poly-bag (plastic wrap) envelope, and, in this recession, we'd like to keep things as inexpensive as possible. Though you aren't the only one with this type of problem, rest assured that thousands of others get their home-delivered copy of VG&CE in good condition. As a verification, we get a copy of VG&CE sent to us exactly as a subscriber would get it (to verify date and quality of receipt), and have had no trouble at all.

As a final step, if you—or any one of our readers—have a problem with your subscription or need a back issue, give our subscription office a call at (310) 858-7155. Good luck, and thanks for reading VG&CE.

NO MISTEAKS PLEASE

Dear VG&CE:

I usually don't write letters. A true product of the times, I do most of my communicating by phone. Besides, I'd rather be playing computer games (recommended, naturally, by your excellent magazine). But, as a sincere and firmly addicted admirer and enjoyer of top-notch games (*Populous*, *SimCity*, *AD&D*, etc.), I wanted to write of a concern regarding one aspect in the production of these games that seems to have been overlooked by most major computer software companies—the English language.

My friends and I have been upset by consistent typos/misspellings in computer games. In America, where education has been a bad joke for decades, it's distressing that today's cream of the brain-oriented should be so careless in responsibility that errors are passed on to the customer without a second glance.

A couple of examples:

• In *Populous II*, the word "pacifist" is used. And there it is on my screen: "pacafist." A Pac-Man relative, perhaps? (Since the world of American computer software is based in California, it might be assumed the spelling of the Pacific Ocean would be a clue to the spelling of pacifist, even if they don't know that "c" followed by "a" makes the "c" sound hard instead of soft.)

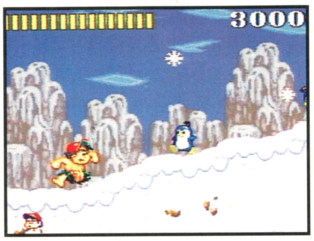
• In an AD&D game, one frame *intends* to ask the player, "What Do You Do?," except the screen reads, "What *To* You Do?" We're not talking about the minor errors found in almost any printed matter, but about glaring errors that give the impression it doesn't matter.

It will be a great pity if the bright and funny minds of the computer world continue to be examples of contempt both for English and for taking the time to see a job done thoroughly and well. The lack of a sense of personal pride in a product has created many of the problems this country suffers from today. We'd like to think of software creators as a hope, both educationally and ethically, and not as perpetua-

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

The Master of Adventure!









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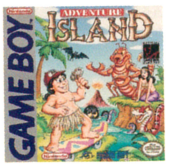
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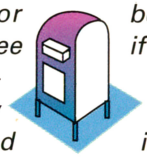
tors of slipshod practices long overdue to be discontinued.

I hope your publication will be able to influence the software companies to use the editing and proofreading capabilities you use so effectively. Thank you for your attention and for your most enjoyable and helpful magazine.

—Sue Ellin
Vernon, Connecticut

Our answer will be short and not-so-sweet: Yes, there is a serious problem with grammar and spelling in computer and video games today. Certainly, a good chunk of that is due to the influence of Japan, to the fact that games are designed there, then translated for the American market. With that, come translation slipups and syntax errors.

We'll keep pushing for "cleanliness" in the use of the language, but there are no guarantees. Almost every company has a contingent of beta testers and game play consultants, but, unfortunately, there isn't enough use of proofreaders for electronic games. Maybe we'll see it change if enough people complain. It's hard enough to know when to use "its" or "it's" and whether it's "there," "their" or "they're."



CLUBBING THE CLUB

Dear VG&CE:

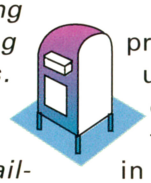
I'm a 40-year-old gamer who does not subscribe to your magazine, though I do purchase copies depending on *Easter Egg Hunt* and some of your reviews.

My question is, why in the world are you subjecting your readers, many of whom are children, to ads from the Ultimate Game Club? I've read letters in at least two of your competitors' magazines that complained of problems customers have had with that organization. I know that these problems are true because I, too, had problems with them that were not resolved until I contacted the Better Business Bureau in that city.

Your customers, especially the younger ones, will have a tendency to trust ads run in your magazine—I think they deserve better.

—Michael Pearson
Chicago, Illinois

As we've noted before, particularly in the March 1991 Yea & Nay, *VG&CE is interested in knowing that our readership is being treated well by advertisers. However, we don't want to jump the gun in canceling ads from a game company or mail-order source. After our initial request for letters of complaint, we did get a bunch of letters regarding the Ultimate Game Club. It's important to note that the owners assured us that there were some problems and that they were doing all they could to alleviate them. While we can't assure that every single complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily—no company is perfect—today, UGC complaints have practically disappeared. Giving UGC the benefit of the doubt, it looks as if we may have made the right move in not making a hasty decision. Some have called us insensitive, but we would like to call it cautious.*



Now appears to be a good time to reiterate our desire to work as a middleman between the readers and advertisers in disputes. If anyone has trouble with an order and hasn't gotten satisfaction from a company, please feel free to drop a note to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. We'll do what we can to fix it. Most of the companies that we've spoken to have also expressed an interest in hearing about customers who are having trouble.

GEE-O, WHEN WILL YOU COVER THE NEO?

Dear VG&CE:

First of all, I just want to let you know that I think your magazine is great. I've been a loyal subscriber for the past two or three years. I've got a gripe though. I've owned just about every video-game system to hit the market in the past five years. I've gotten rid of them all because of the *lame* software that was consistently produced for the systems. Finally, the Neo•Geo came onto the scene, and I haven't once regretted making the purchase.

The Neo•Geo does have its problems, e.g., unlimited continues and limited software (especially major sports titles), but this I'm sure will alleviate itself in the coming months with the addition of multiple third-party licensees.

It is because of the lack of coverage that your magazine gives this great system that I'm writing you this letter. The Neo•Geo deserves to be recognized in your magazine with reviews, tips and player's guides. Yours is the only magazine that I subscribe to, but, if you don't start covering the Neo•Geo, I'm going to have to look elsewhere. Don't get me wrong, I think the other systems deserve coverage too; but, let's face it, the Neo•Geo is where this industry is headed. People are getting fed up with 8-bit graphics and games that just aren't fun anymore. True video-game enthusiasts demand great graphics, sound and game play in their video games, and the Neo•Geo delivers. I agree that a lot of people who enjoy this hobby can't afford the Neo•Geo, but there are a lot of people who can, and we need a magazine that will give this system the coverage it deserves.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

—Robert W. Young
Stratford, New Jersey

I think you'll be pleased when you look at next month's Video-Game Reviews *section. We've made arrangements with SNK to get looks at Neo•Geo games before they are released, which was a stumbling block to our reviewing them previously. We've been getting a lot of these requests, and we're happy it's finally coming true.*

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BOOM.



In case you haven't heard, legendary Contra commandos have raided the 16-bit scene and blasted it to ballistic dimensions. CONTRA III – THE ALIEN WARS™ is primed and designed to blow your mind. It will do things with your Super NES™ you never thought possible, and leave you quaking in your combat boots.

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This is the big one. The mission your Super NES was built for.

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CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed ***Tip Sheet*** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to:

VG&CE,
9171 Wilshire Blvd.,
Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
Attn: *Tip Sheet*



BY
DONN NAUERT

Can you give me the password that will take me straight to Mike Tyson in *Mike Tyson's Punch Out*?

You can start at Mike Tyson by entering 007-373-5963.

I have the game *Platoon*, but I didn't get an instruction booklet with the game. I can't figure out how to get out of the maze. As a matter of fact, I can't get out of the first board.

—Curtis Hicks
Hillsboro, Ohio

From the explosives, travel left (working your way along the top) and then go R, D, R, U, L and finally R. This will lead you to the bridge and the remainder of the game.

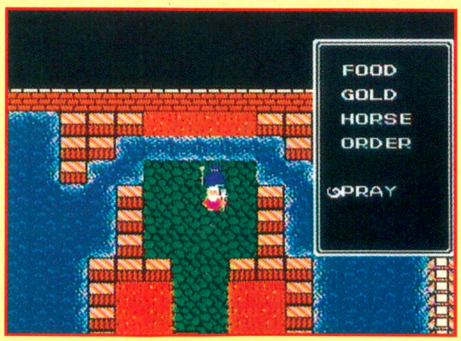
Shining in the Darkness is a fantastic role-playing game for the Genesis. However, I am having a tough time finishing the Cave of Wisdom. I've explored the whole cave, and the only place I can't travel is blocked by a trapdoor and treasure chest. Is this the way into the Shrine of Wisdom? If so, how do I cross it? If not, then how do I get out of the Cave of Wisdom?

—Chris Neilson
Tampa, Florida

You need the cell key to start, then fall through the hole at coordinates 13S, 5E to reach the treasure chest, and 10S, 18E to find the end of the cave.

In the game *Ultima Exodus*, I can't find Exodus. I have found the castle, but he is nowhere in sight. I've done everything I can think of, but still no luck. All the hint book said was that it was a maze. Can you help me find Exodus?

—Brent Bradshaw
Kingman, Arizona



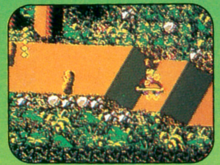
To find Exodus, you must first have all four marks and all four cards. Once you enter the castle, take the first right and then travel up the corridor. When you reach the open courtyard, turn upward and continue up through that doorway and past the barrier. Now turn left and head down, following the corridor until you reach the room shown in the picture. Get to the back, against the water and pray. You've now found Exodus. Remember, you must have all four cards and all four marks before your prayer will be answered. And hopefully you spoke to the Time Lord and wrote down what he said. He's located in the Cave of Moon, Level 8, in the top-left corner.

GO APE!

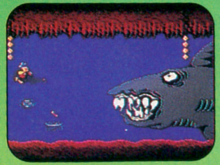
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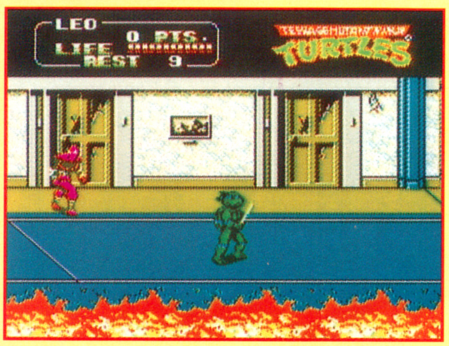
CIRCLE #200 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

In the January 1992 issue of VG&CE, there was a code for *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Arcade Game* that we can't get to work. We have for the code B, A, B, A, U, D, B, A, L, R, B, A, **START**. Is this correct? If not, what is the correct code?

—Bobby Lawrence
Norton, Ohio

The code listed in the January issue is correct. After you input the code, during the title screen, you'll choose your character and then get the Stage Select screen. When you start play, you'll also have ten men.



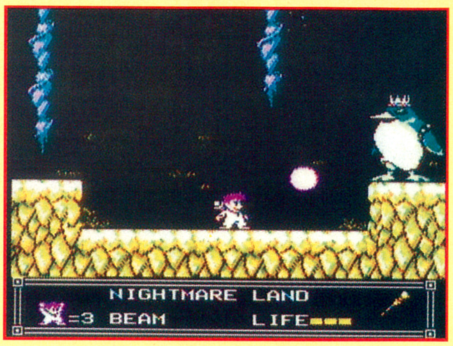


In the game *Little Nemo—The Dream Master*, how do I defeat the end boss on Level 8? I can't get past the small birds he throws.

—Kylie Tate
Coalmont, Tennessee

*Press **SELECT** to switch to the Morning Star and take out the small penguins. When the larger penguin appears, press and hold the B button to get a high-power beam. When the larger penguin is in range, fire. It will take about eight to ten hits to beat this boss.*





I'm in Chapter 4 of *Star Tropics* for the NES. There's one part that requires you to dip the letter that came with the game in water to get a code. The problem is that I lost the letter. Could you please give me the code? Thanks.

—Jenni Meister
Diamond Bar, California

The code that you get by dipping the letter in water is 747.

I've made it pretty far in the game *Might and Magic* for the Genesis, but now I'm stuck. At the Square Lake Cavern, you must stop the computer's error. I entered the password "WAFE," but it says there is an error and gives a jumbled message; then it says "answer =PREAMBLE," and wants another password. Could you please tell me what that password is?

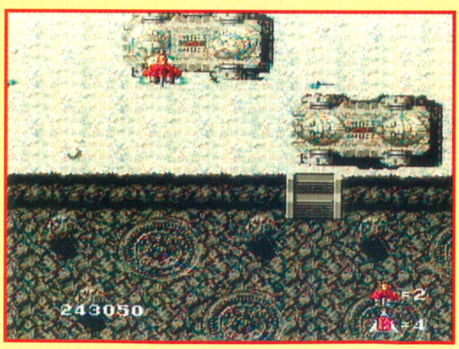
—Ramzi Nuseibeh
Aurora, Indiana

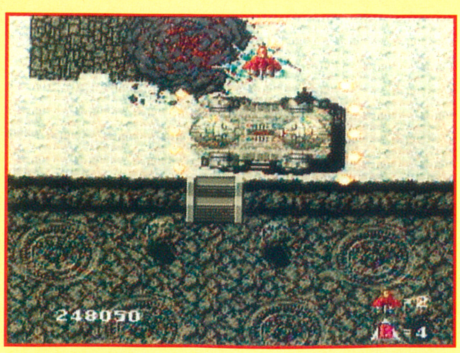
Here's an example of how to decode the cryptogram.

WE THE PEOPLE OF TERRA, IN ORDER TO FORM A MORE UNION,

AC XBC GCYGTC YE XCKKO ZQ YKJCK XY EYKI O IYKC LQZYQ

ANSWER=PREAMBLE
GKCOI TC





I have the game *Raiden* for the Turbo-Grafx-16. Could you please tell me how I can get past the Level 6 boss?

—Billy Dowd
Kansas City, Kansas

This can be one of the toughest bosses ever, if you don't know the pattern. First, move as close to the two heads on the second track (the ones in back) as you can to take them out. Now, stay above the two heads on the first track and let the homing missiles do the rest.

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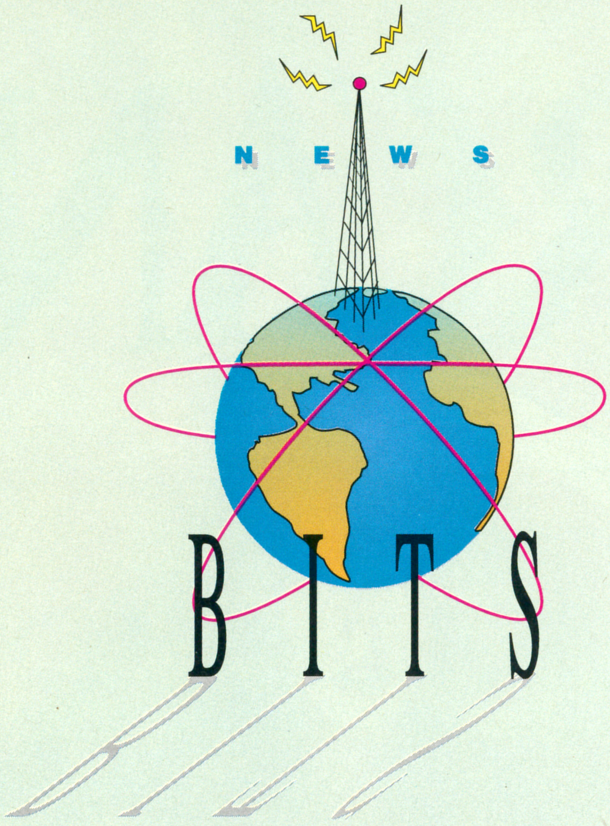
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CIRCLE #110 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

COMPILED BY
JOYCE WORLEY



EA, Brøderbund Agree

Electronic Arts and Brøderbund Software have inked deals to work together, both on a Genesis software project and on distribution of products abroad.

Brøderbund signed an agreement for Electronic Arts to distribute Brøderbund's disk-based software in Europe. Speaking for Electronic Arts' European office, Mark Lewis expressed enthusiasm: "The quality of Brøderbund's software, their commitment to localization and their increasing focus on the 'edutainment' market will complement our distribution system in Europe and allow us to further develop our IBM PC and Macintosh channels."

A separate agreement allows EA to develop and distribute a Sega Genesis version of the Brøderbund hit *Where*







in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?, which will be the first version of the *Carmen* game playable on the Genesis.

Villa Crespo Plans Movie Reference, New Game Series

Villa Crespo Software (1725 McGovern St., Highland Park, IL 60035; [708] 433-0500), a company best known for its line of video gambling programs, announced that it is developing a reference library for film buffs. A new twist on entertainments on disk, *Flicks! Film Review Library* catalogs over 10,000 titles, making use of graphics, sound and animations.

The program contains easy search and retrieval routines to speed finding a favorite flick. It also functions as a videotape cataloger for collectors, and contains a built-in trivia quiz game for up to four players. It should be available in June for IBM PC computers.

The company also is readying a new line of software this year called The Coffee Break Series. These titles will retail for $12.95, and feature games that are very easy and fast to play, requiring only a few minutes of time. The first volume in the series is *Amarillo Slim's 7 Card Stud*, and the second is *Sanford Wong's Jacks+ Poker*.

Graphics Card for Amiga Expands Palette

Centaur Software (P.O. Box 4400, Redondo Beach, CA 90278; [310] 542-2226) has formed a new division, Centaur Development, and the new company signed an agreement with Opal Technology of Australia. Under the terms of the agreement, Centaur has manufacturing and distribution rights to the expandable OpalVision 24-bit display effects card for the Amiga computers. The enhancement comes in internal and external versions, and is said to provide 24-bit, broadcast-quality video.



OpalVision has 1.5 megabytes of display memory, a graphics processor and is expandable. It operates in multiple resolutions, automatically reconfigures itself for PAL or NTSC video and can generate 24-bit double-buffered animations. It comes with *OpalPaint*, a 24-bit painting program, a variety of utilities and a 24-bit game, *King of Karate*. Because the new hardware generates 16 million colors (compared to the Amiga's norm of 4,096 colors), the new game is said to have graphic and animation quality heretofore impossible for the Amiga.

Millennium Comes to America

The U.K.-based company, Millennium Software Ltd., is coming to the U.S., thanks to a distribution deal with Electronic Arts. Under the Affiliated

You'll find many of these exciting new features on our updated classics:

BACK & Better Than Ever!

NEW MAC FEATURES!

All MAC versions are System 7 compatible and available in color and black/white.

- Programmed by Apple specialists
- Magnate high score of best players
- Numerous player options
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CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Label agreement, EA will distribute Millennium's programs in Europe, Australia and North America.

The first game released in North America will be *Global Effect*, an environmental program that tracks economic, industrial, environmental and military factors. The game has four save-a-world scenarios, two rule-a-world contests and eight scenarios that let the player create a world.

The world simulation is for one or two gamers, and it will be available this summer for Amiga and IBM PC play.

Innovation Offers Unique Connectors

Innovation (1491 Boston Post Road, Olf Saybrook, CT 06475; [203] 395-0853) has a line of products designed to enhance existing video-game equipment. For example, the Super 8 Converter lets 8-bit Nintendo games play on the Super Nintendo. The Passport lets any 8-bit Nintendo game from any country play in any NES system anywhere. The Lynx-Vision lets gamers play Lynx games on television, using a regular Lynx system.

Other devices allow games to be played using an automobile cigarette lighter, wall socket or battery pack as power sources, let games go through the television and allow controllers to be used cross-system.

Franklin Intros Baseball Encyclopedia

Franklin Electronic Publishers, a company best known for its line of portable references and translators, unveiled a handheld encyclopedia for baseball fans. *Big League Baseball* weighs only five ounces, yet contains



baseball statistics for every player in the National and American leagues.

The user accesses information by typing in the name of a player (and the phonetic spelling corrector adjusts misspelled names and offers alternatives for guesses). The player information includes birth date, death date, height, weight, whether or not in Hall of Fame, handedness of batting and throwing, plus year by year data. It also is capable of compiling lists of players arranged by stats, from simple inquiries such as "all-time home run leaders," to complex ones like "highest triples to at-bats ratio by an American League hitter in the 1930s with 100 or more at bats."

Just the right size for taking along to the ballpark, the unit measures 4.5" x 3" x .25" (shirt-pocket size). The suggested retail price is $129.95.

Philips Announces New Software

Philips Interactive Media of America announced 25 new software titles for CD-I and promised "dozens more" new programs this year.

Dr. Bernie Luskin, president of PIMA, said: "These new titles reflect a second generation of software.... Philips anticipates the release of approximately 25 new titles per quarter throughout 1992."

Among the programs scheduled are *Backgammon, Caesar's World of Gambling, Dark Castle, Jigsaw, Sargon Chess, Battleship, Sporting News Baseball, Pinball, Children's Bible Stories, Jazz Jukebox* and other CD-I entertainments such as *Gardening, Great Arts Series* and *Private Lessons Series* (for guitar students).

Top NASCAR Racers Win Cars

Gaming skills paid off in a big way for the country's top computer and NES racers, in the Bill Elliott NASCAR Challenge Contest, sponsored by Konami. Philip Young, age 23, of College Station, Texas, won top honors with a time of 44.05 seconds in the personal computer division. Winner of the NES division was Jason Miller, age 16, of Armuchee, Georgia, with a track time of 44.53 seconds. Both were awarded 1992 Ford Thunderbird Super Coupes.

Konami sponsored the contest to find the best players of *Bill Elliott's NASCAR Challenge*. Gamers were invited to submit a photo of their highest scores on the Konami hit title, and the three contestants with the best tallies in each division won trips to the Daytona 500 NASCAR race and competed for the grand prize.





Software Toolworks Makes Alliances

Software Toolworks will distribute certain Lucasfilm CD-ROM games, according to terms of an agreement just signed by the two entertainment companies. Under the specific provisions of the marketing contract, Software Toolworks is now in charge of North American distribution of three Lucasfilm CD-ROM products, *Loom, The Secret of Monkey Island* and *The Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* (including the original game and four Tour of Duty disks).

Under the terms of a separate agreement with Sega of America, Software Toolworks has agreed to develop software for the Sega 16-bit Genesis system.

In a third landmark deal, Software Toolworks agreed with Nintendo of America to work on edutainment products for the 8-bit NES and the 16-bit Super

NES. This line of games will make use of the Mario Bros. characters.

MLSA Inks Deal With USA Today

MicroLeague Sports Association is now offering real-time stats to MicroLeague players, thanks to an agreement with USA Today Sports Center. Under the terms of the deal, MicroLeague players will be able to download stats from the Sports Center to update game disks, without need for additional software.

Neil Swartz, president of MicroLeague, explained: "MicroLeague players will have the most accurate, true-to-life statistical action available throughout each eason. It's ideal for Rotisserie and fantasy league players who follow the latest game stats."

New baseball, football, hockey and basketball products introduced this year will take advantage of the agreement and allow players to update their disks with the downloaded stats.

Game Genie Code Books Announced

Game Genie code updates (with codes for 15 games) are now available by subscription. Game Genie owners can subscribe to four quarterly issues, each containing new game listings, for $3.50, plus $1.50 for postage and handling, from Game Genie Updates, P.O. Box 5606, Stacy, MN 55079.

Booklet No. 2, now available, contains listings for *Dragon Warrior II, Dragon's Lair, Ski or Die, Kiwi Kraze* and 11 more good games.

Electronic Arts Starts CD Group

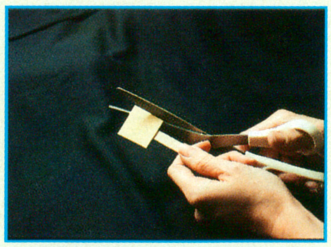
Electronic Arts has formed a CD group under the management of Stewart Bonn, and assigned Luc Barthelet responsibility for technology and development. Both men were previously involved in Electronic Arts' 16-bit videogame product line.

"In the near future, CD multimedia machines will represent a huge opportunity for consumer software," explained EA President Larry Probst.

The new group will work on new categories of entertainment software, including edutainment, infotainment and creativity products. The company expects CD technology to supersede disks and cartridges within the next few years.

Cartridge Cleaner for Budget-Minded

Irata Systems has come up with an inexpensive cleaning tool for Nintendo game cartridges and the NES control deck. Irata Cleanstix consists of a wooden stick with a square of special cleaning cloth on the end. The user simply dampens the pad with rubbing alcohol, inserts it into the control deck or cartridge and dusts the connector contacts.







The reusable wooden sticks cost $1 for five, or $2 for a dozen, from Irata Systems, 2562 E. Glade Ave., Mesa, AZ 85204-6208; (602) 926-7969.

General Videotex Acquires BIX

General Videotex Corporation announced purchase of BIX, the on-line service developed by *BYTE* magazine. The BIX line, a service for interaction between programmers, engineers, designers and other computer specialists, will continue to service the *BYTE* audience and current BIX subscribers.

GVC also operates Delphi, an on-line service for consumers, and develops material for other media, distributing information through cable television, telex, Regional Bell telephone gateways and affiliates abroad.

GVC's president, Dan Bruns, explained how his company views the two telecommunication lines: "BIX addresses the needs of the high-tech professional, while Delphi appeals to the consumer and personal computer market."

Publisher Offers Directory on Disk

ABCD-ROM Inc. (2750 14th Ave. Unit 2, Toronto, Ontario, Canada L3R OB6; [416] 222-3766) is publishing a directory of CD-ROM products and services available for the Macintosh. The disks will be available quarterly at a cost of $15 each, or annually for $39.95.

The directory works on Macintosh computers with a minimum configuration of two megabytes and a 13-inch, 8-bit color monitor.



Genesis Controllers Get Spare Parts

Doc's Hi Tech Game Products Inc. unveiled a new line of replacement parts for the Sega Genesis controllers at this year's Toy Fair in New York. The Riverside, California, company markets a broad line of accessories for videogame systems.

The Replace-A-Pad (item No. 4220) looks and works exactly like the controller that comes with the Genesis system. It retails for $19.99 and is available in most computer and video-game stores.

Doc's Fix-A-Pad (No. 3520) contains enough parts (including a Phillips screwdriver and easy instructions) to completely rebuild two standard Genesis controllers. The do-it-yourself kit sells for $6.99.

On-Line Chess Sanctioned by USCF

CompuServe's new on-line feature, Chess Forum, lets chess players face off against each other by telecommunication in the first on-line chess games ever sanctioned by the United States Chess Federation.

The Chess Forum lets members play chess in either

USCF-rated or nonrated games and tournaments. Rated games post moves on an electronic bulletin board in the Forum, and nonrated games are played either on the board or in a live forum conference area, which also provides a gathering place for players to chat, get news and download chess software.

Atari Cuts Equipment Prices

Atari is phasing out the $149 Lynx package; the new Lynx pack sells for $129 and includes the Lynx, *California Games*, ComLynx cable, six AA batteries and a carrying pouch. This is a savings of about $35 over buying the items separately.

The Lynx screen shield/sun visor is now priced at $4.99, and the Lynx battery pack, which uses six D cells and provides over 30 hours of playtime, has been repriced to a low $14.99.

Sequels, Add-Ons and Enhancements

Paperboy's sequel, *Paperboy 2*, developed by Software Toolworks, provides lots more houses in new neighborhoods with more obstacles. Some of the things to watch out for are dogs, skateboarders and break dancers, and the player can do bicycle stunts over fences, flower beds and garbage cans. It's available for the NES, Super NES, Game Boy, Amiga and IBM PC.



The latest course disk for Access' *LINKS* is *Barton Creek Country Club*, in Austin, Texas, site of the Senior PGA Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf Tournament. The course is prized for being beautiful but treacherous, with lots of hills and hazards. It's available for the IBM PC for $24.95, and, of course, it requires the original *LINKS* program in order to play.

The PGA TOUR Golf Tournament Course Disk (Electronic Arts for the Amiga, IBM PC and Macintosh) includes three new courses and tournaments: TPC at Eagle Trace, home of The Honda Classic; TPC of Scottsdale, home of the Phoenix Open; and TPC at Southwind, home of the Federal Express St. Jude Classic.

Panzer Battles, from Strategic Studies Group, is the second entry in the *Battlefront* series for the Amiga. This game follows *Halls of Montezuma*, and recreates six battles on the Russian Front, 1941-44. The program also includes SSG's *WarPlan* and *WarPaint*, design kits for scenarios and new battles, and a terrain and icon builder.

Interplay's *Lord of the Rings* series continues with *Volume II: The Two Towers*, for IBM PC computers. It follows closely on the heels of *Volume I*, and sends the party through the Forest of Fangorn, over the mountains, past the caves, along the paths of the dead and to the towers. You don't have to read Tolkien's masterpiece to enjoy this or play the earlier game, but it wouldn't hurt, either. The program uses point-and-click, a full musical score, digitized speech and sound effects, auto-mapping and full-screen VGA graphics.

Top Coin-Ops for February 1992

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Terminator 2* by Midway
2. *Super High Impact* by Midway
3. *Captain America* by Data East
4. *Sunset Riders* by Konami
5. *Double Axle* by Taito
6. *Captain Commando* by Capcom
7. *Spider-Man* by Sega
8. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
9. *Space Gun* by Taito
10. *Indy Heat* by Leland

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Steel Talons* by Atari
2. *Road Riot* by Atari
3. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
4. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
5. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
6. *Mad Dog McCree* by Betson/Icat
7. *G-LOC* by Sega
8. *Cisco Heat* by Jaleco
9. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
10. *GP Rider* by Sega

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
2. *Fatal Fury* by SNK
3. *Football Frenzy* by SNK
4. *Robo Army* by SNK
5. *Wrestlefest* by Technos
6. *King of Dragons* by Romstar
7. *High Impact* by Williams
8. *Rim Rockin' B-Ball* by Strata
9. *Super Baseball 2020* by SNK
10. *Raiden* by Fabtek

Top IBM PC Games for December 1991

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, DC., based on sales data received from Software Etc., Electronics Boutique, Babbages and Waldensoftware.

Top 10 IBM PC Games

1. *Police Quest III* by Sierra On-Line
2. *Mike Ditka Ultimate Football* by Accolade
3. *Leisure Suit Larry V* by Sierra On-Line
4. *Falcon 3.0* by Spectrum HoloByte
5. *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood* by Sierra On-Line
6. *F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0* by MicroProse
7. *Civilization* by MicroProse
8. *Chessmaster 3000* by Software Toolworks
9. *King's Quest V* by Sierra On-Line
10. *Wing Commander II* by Origin Systems

Top 10 IBM PC Education Games

1. *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
2. *Where in the USA Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
3. *SimCity* by Maxis
4. *Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
5. *Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?* by Brøderbund
6. *New Math Blaster Plus* by Davidson
7. *Treehouse* by Brøderbund
8. *Kid Pix* by Brøderbund
9. *SimAnt* by Maxis
10. *Reader Rabbit 2* by The Learning Company











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STEEL EMPIRE



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Unleash a storm of destruction with your Lightning Bomb



Launch an assault on the heavily armored Aero Gun Ship



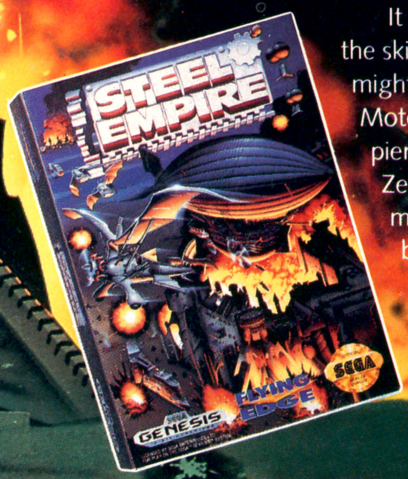
The Motorhead Empire is steamrolling across its borders



Landslides fill the caverns with boulders and explosive gases



Don't let General Styron escape justice!



It is the Age of Steel. Mammoth battleships cruise the skies. Invincible fortresses float on air... and military might rules the day. Only one hope against the evil Motorhead Empire invasion remains...You! Fire armor piercing missiles from your Striker aircraft and Z-01 Zeppelin and reduce Motorhead's juggernauts to molten metal. Enter the future that might have been...and wage the war of the *Steel Empire!*

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CIRCLE #200 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: **Easter Egg Hunt.** *The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!*



Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

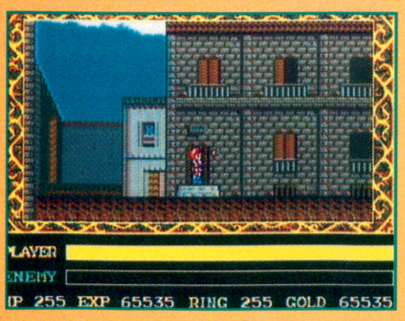
Ys III— Wanderers From Ys

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

To start the game with 65,535 experience points and gold, input this code sent in by Michael Wagnon, of Inglewood, California:

ASzz2 / DDDDC#C / #C#C#DH
Qgggg / ggf$$$$ / $$$$?$$
$$$$$ / $$$$$$$ / $$$$$$$
$$$$O / ##



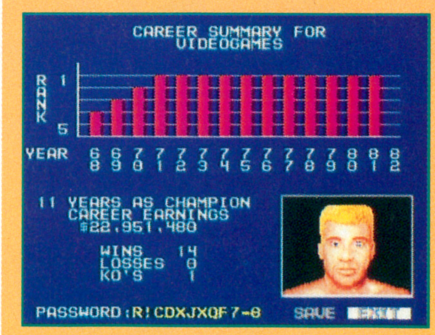


Champions Forever Boxing

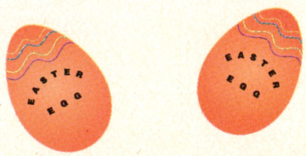
(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

Here are codes for all 15 career years, giving you a record of 14-0 (15-0, if you beat Ken Norton in 1982) with one knockout. From 1971 until 1982, all fights are for the heavyweight championship.

	Code	Opponent
1968	No password	George Foreman
1969	WMQQ8LQMV7NX	Ken Norton
1970	T4Q8QLVQV7NL	George Foreman
1971	JMQKK—VMV77N	Joe Frazier
1972	W!Q7.P8QF748	George Foreman
1973	SKQN.V8MF7L4	Joe Frazier
1974	LRQR8P.QF7QC	Muhammad Ali
1975	LMQ!KS.MF7—Q	George Foreman
1976	LJVSCJKQF7F2	Joe Frazier
1977	G7VD.—KMF7.F	Ken Norton
1978	M!88VPCQF7—C	Joe Frazier
1979	7M89S!CMF7.X	Larry Holmes
1980	N7.NX!SQF7T.	Ken Norton
1981	DJK4SKSMF7KX	Joe Frazier
1982	R!CDXJXQF7—8	Ken Norton







continued on page 30

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Big Prizes!



Scarface Massacre!



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Total Carnage!



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CIRCLE #200 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 28

Desert Strike

(Electronic Arts for the Genesis)



Here are passwords for campaigns 2 through 4:

Campaign 2: AQJMMHW
Campaign 3: TLOEOAQ
Campaign 4: JTKKOME





In the second campaign, there is a downed F-15 aircraft in the northeast corner of the map (due north of the POW Camp). The pilot of the downed plane is Jake Valdez. Complete the campaign and return to the frigate. Jake will now become available for the third campaign.





Rolling Thunder

(Namco for the Genesis)



Patrick Reynolds, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, sent in passwords for all 11 levels in the first two quests. The letters indicate which phrase to use.

	First Quest	Second Quest
Level	**Password**	**Password**
1	No Password	RPSG
2	MTLS	CRLF
3	NFCG	MIBD
4	RNSN	PLPN
5	CPPP	SFEG
6	LLBS	DRMS
7	PIDT	LTSP
8	NREF	RMDF
9	MMMK	SNBT
10	DNPD	CICK
11	PTCP	NPDN

DecapAttack

(Sega for the Genesis)



If you get all five coins and put them all into the channels listed below, you'll be able to score tons of extra lives. Here's the list, and below is how you can ensure you'll hit the bonus lives:

Bonus Round 1: Channel 2 (from left)
Bonus Round 2: Channel 5 (from left)
Bonus Round 3: Channel 3 (from left)
Bonus Round 4: Channel 5 (from left)

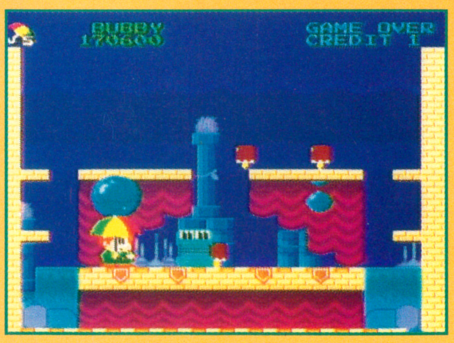
Now place all five of your guys in these channels, then, when they reach the top, hit the C button as fast as you can. The roulette channels will come in, but, basically, they'll fall into place as long as you hit the C button as fast as possible before they start moving.

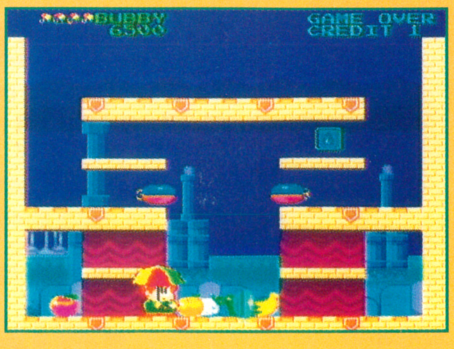
Parasol Stars

(Working Designs for the TG-16)



Lily Lew, of San Francisco, California, has found a way to start the game with a Mystery Crest. Go to any stage and make two big bubbles. Reset the game and begin play. After a few seconds, it should appear. Thanks for the great Easter egg, Lily.





continued on page 32

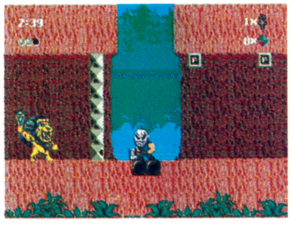
KID CHAMELEON™

This kid is having an identity crisis.



Become Kid Chameleon™ from Sega.™ You'll change personalities as fast as you'll change helmets.

One moment you're Maniaxe, a lunatic in a hockey mask, armed with hatchets and ready for action. And then switch into Red Stealth, a sword swinging samurai who



turns even the baddest bad guys into sushi. Put on another helmet and become Berzerker, a demented rhinoman who takes any challenge head on.

Watch out, these are just a few of the maniacs you can transform into. Collect other helmets and turn a tough situation into a head-banging party.

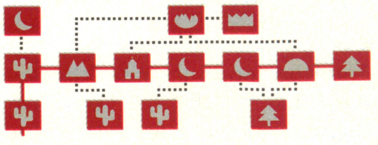


In fact, these helmets come in real handy when you go head-to-head with bone-crushing



Flying Robots, head-smashing Skull Ghosts or flesh-eating Land Sharks. Or any of the other vicious creatures that love to turn your world upside down.

There's over 100 rounds to slam your head against. 1800 screens with eye-popping graphics. And so many secret passages you'll be whacking your brain to find 'em.



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CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 30

American Gladiators

(GAMETEK FOR THE NES)

Jason Yeh, of Anaheim, California, has found a way to skip levels in this game. First, choose the number of players you want. Then, move the cursor to the password option and press the buttons as shown below for the level you want. Thanks, Jason.

Level Two—A, B, A, A, A, A, B, B
Level Three—A, B, A, A, B, A, A, A
Level Four—A, B, A, A, B, B, B, B

Super Tennis

(NINTENDO FOR THE SNES)

This password will take you to Don J, an extremely challenging opponent. He's located on a secret island you can't see on the world map:

K8XD3HR FTLWJPC DJSTK8X D3HRFTL
2GNYBQ1 4065C6P WJPPDLW 1RK





Here's another code to enter the secret tournament, called the Exhibition Tournament, which you normally cannot get to unless you have won every tournament and finished ranked number one in the world:

PC2GNYB Q14065C
TLWJPC2 GNYBQ14
6PDJSTK 8XD3HRF
065QJNM FTW





On the Select Player screen, press these buttons: L five times, X, R seven times and X. The music will change to a different tune.

Super Smash TV

(ACCLAIM FOR THE SNES)

On the one/two player select screen, press L, R, L, L, R. You'll call up a sound test screen. Press the **START** button to exit the sound test.

On the one/two player select screen, press D, L, R, U. You'll enter a screen where you can set the amount of lives and continues you have at the beginning of the game. You can have from three to seven lives, and from four to seven continues.

There are three secret rooms, one in each of the three arenas. The secret rooms aren't shown on the map, and the exit lights won't point to them. Here's the location of each secret room:

Arena 1: Clear the room "Total Carnage" (in the lower-right corner of the map). Run through the door on the right.

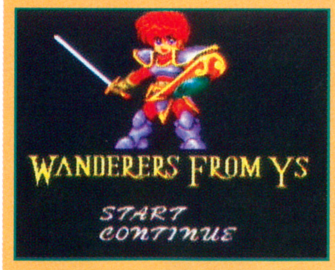
Arena 2: Clear the room "Buffalo Herd Nearby!" (in the lower-right corner). Run through the door on the right.

Arena 3: Clear the room "Secret Rooms Nearby!" (in the lower-right corner). Run through the door on the right.

To enter the Pleasure Dome, you have to collect ten keys. When you clear the room "Have Enough Keys!" (this room is near the end of the game), run through the door at the bottom of the screen. You'll appear in the Pleasure Dome.

Wanderers From Ys

(AMERICAN SAMMY FOR THE SNES)





Bubba Davis, of Guyton, Georgia, sent in this great Easter egg that will allow you to become invincible in the game. First, begin and save a game. Then, press **RESET** and wait until the American Sammy logo is completely on the screen. Then press U, D, U, D, **SELECT**, **START** on Controller 2 before the logo disappears. Select Continue, and then press **SELECT** to bring up a subscreen. Now, press **START** on Controller 2 and the word "Debug" will appear next to Status if you've done this correctly. Thanks, Bubba, for the Easter egg.

To enter the sound test, during play press **SELECT** to bring up a subscreen. Now, press **START** on Controller 2.

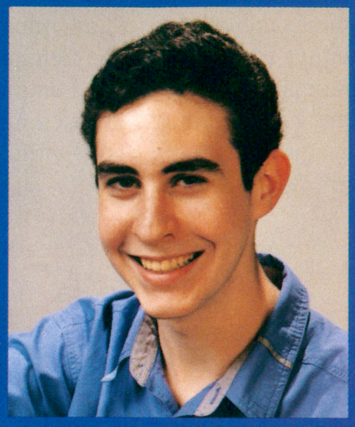


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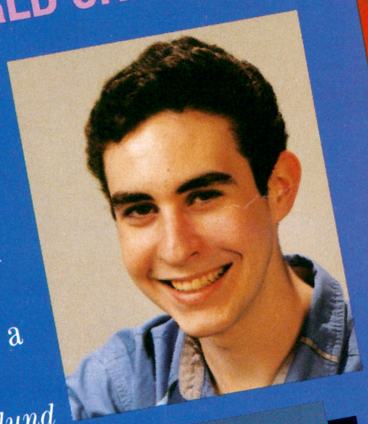
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NEW

Introducing MIG-29 and Fire Hawk from Camerica Games

NINTENDO WORLD CHAMPION



"Here are two great additions for your game collection. MIG-29 is the fastest jet fighter game on any system and Fire Hawk has equal portions of strategy and adventure for a unique game experience."

–Thor Aackerlund





Fire Hawk *Coming soon.*

Experience the control and power of an advanced helicopter gunship on a series of deadly missions. Supersonic sound effects and dazzling 3D graphics!

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The ultimate air combat game! Action, excitement, intrigue and super fast 3D graphics.

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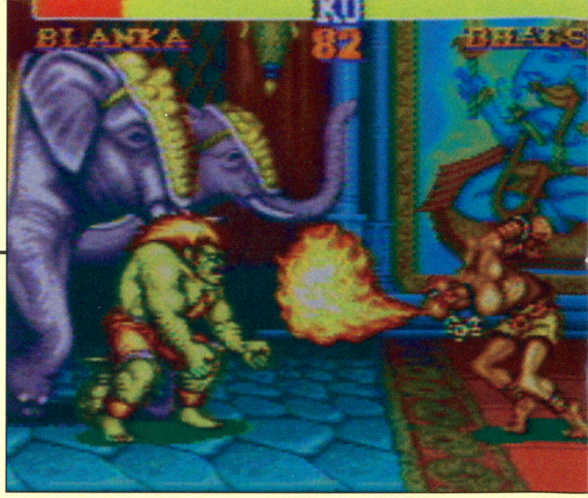
Dizzy
Best NES Graphic Adventure Game 1991
Game Players

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Printed in Canada

CIRCLE #143 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

VIDEO GAME REVIEWS



Street Fighter II: The World Warrior

CAPCOM
For the Super NES (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10









I must admit, after so many years in the video- and computer-gaming industry, it really has become difficult for any particular game to make an incredible impression on me. You might say that I'm too critical, or it's just that I've experienced sensory overload and I've burnt out. Capcom's much anticipated *Street Fighter II* is one of the few games that does leave an impression on these old, overused synapses.

First of all, *Street Fighter II* is a huge game—a whopping 16 megabits in size. In fact, it is the largest game to date for the Super NES. If you are a fan of the coin-op version, then you're in for a big surprise. For the most part, *Street Fighter II* has lost very little in the translation to the Super NES. Virtually all the moves are there, but a few of the background animations have been eliminated—a small sacrifice, considering the programming feat.

Street Fighter II is a one- or two-player game that allows gamers to choose one of eight characters, from a list of six different countries, in head-to-head martial arts competition. Each of the game's characters has a special martial arts power (e.g., Blanka can paralyze opponents with a stunning electric shock, Dhalsim can flame them with his yoga fire and Zangief can crush enemies with wrestling moves).



Capcom's *Street Fighter II: The World Warrior* is the largest game ever developed on the SNES.

The game's objectives are simple: Play against an opponent from a different country, defeating him or her in the best of three rounds. While fighting, you have a choice of several moves to use against your enemy: soft, medium and hard punches and kicks, along with the specific special martial arts powers.

Street Fighter II isn't an easy game to master. The amount of existing moves, compounded with the number of characters and their individual idiosyncrasies, leaves the gamer with a multitude of maneuvers to learn. Gamers will wind up using just about every existing combination of buttons on the Super NES controller. Considering all the factors, *Street Fighter II* remains true to its beat-'em-up genre.

The game has 12 levels, while the gamer can select the difficulty (anywhere

from 0 through 7) in the option mode screen before the start of a game. A KO (knock out) meter is displayed at the top of the screen, indicating how much power a player has before he goes down.

In the graphics corner, *Street Fighter II* seems to be without flaws. Both the characters and backgrounds are fully detailed, with all of the action and animation occurring without any slowdowns. Fighting areas are conveniently laced with objects that will break and shatter as the players duke it out.

Street Fighter II's soundtrack is also pretty impressive. The game uses a myriad of sampled sounds, including digitized speech. There are 27 catchy musical scores throughout the game, and an option that lets gamers select stereo or monaural, depending on their setup.

The only area in which *Street Fighter II* is lacking is originality. True, it is a continuing, new episode in a series, but there were too many similarities with *Final Fight* that go beyond the characteristics of genre, including the scene where you must "trash" the car for extra points.

I also wish that the manufacturer would have allotted us more time for a "hands-on" look at the game and a more in-depth and detailed evaluation.

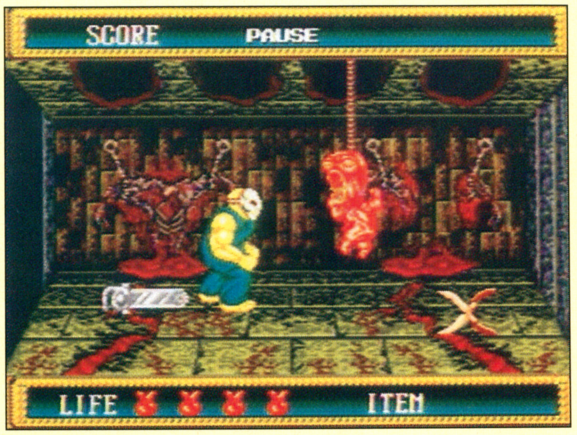
The Competition Joystick, designed specifically for use with *Street Fighter II*, will also be marketed by Capcom and will be sold separately.

Beyond that, *Street Fighter II* seems to be a nominee for 1992's Best Game award, and its fast-paced action is guaranteed to make you walk away from your Super NES with a sore thumb.

—Mike Davila

Capcom U.S.A. Inc.
3303 Scott Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-0400









***Splatterhouse 2* is the sequel to the popular gross-out released on the TG-16 over a year ago.**

Splatterhouse 2

NAMCO

For the Sega Genesis ($54.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Nightmares can be terrible things, especially when they're accompanied by a good dose of guilt. Each night when Rick goes to bed, he can still hear Jennifer's screams. Moreover, he is tormented by visions of a certain haunted mansion. Able to stand the anguish no longer, Rick again puts on his mask and heads for Splatterhouse. It's monster-mashing time!

Splatterhouse 2 is the sequel to the popular gross-out that was released for the TurboGrafx-16 a bit over a year ago. Zombie zappers who liked the first *Splatterhouse* will undoubtedly find much to appreciate in this sequel, which is loaded with the same slimy, blood-and-guts battling that marked the first quest into the creepy unknown.

On this trip, you'll face a whole new set of scenes, although they're similar to those you traveled through in the first game. You'll battle your way through a swamp, a deadly elevator, monster-infested hallways, a haunted river and more. Each scene features the Genesis' famous parallax scrolling for realistic 3-D graphics.

No horror show is complete without a bevy of monsters to spice things up. In *Splatterhouse 2*, you'll meet with bloody corpses, screaming zombies, poisonous snakes, killer fish, dangling car-

casses and more, most of which die horribly when you bash them, exploding into gobs of gooey guts that slime floors and drip down walls. No doubt about it: Splatterhouse is a most unpleasant place.

Although Rick can find weapons to help him along, his real defense is his hand-to-hand combat skill. Rick can punch, jump kick, slide kick and perform other types of attacks. Of course, weapons are nice. Occasionally, Rick will run across things like staves or bone clubs that he can use to pulp enemies who cross his path.

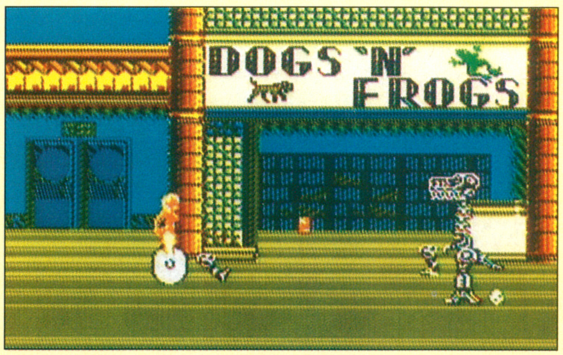
Splatterhouse 2's background graphics are colorful and well-drawn. However, don't expect to see anything that looks much like the real world. This is a nightmare fantasy filled with very strange locales. The creatures' animations, too, are effective, if not downright gross.

Splatterhouse 2 features three levels of play, which are selectable from the game's option screen. The easiest level, Normal, is hard enough if you ask me, but, if you find that the monsters are wimpy, you can up the ante to Difficult or even Game Master. A password feature and unlimited continues will help even novice demon-dicers to the end of the game.

All in all, though, *Splatterhouse 2* comes off as little more than a repeat performance, more of the same hack-and-slash that was featured in its predecessor. While this game may please those who liked the previous effort, *Splatterhouse 2* does nothing to advance the genre.

—Clayton Walnum

Namco
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Santa Clara, CA 95054
(406) 496-6371





Defenders of Dynatron City

JVC

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.99)

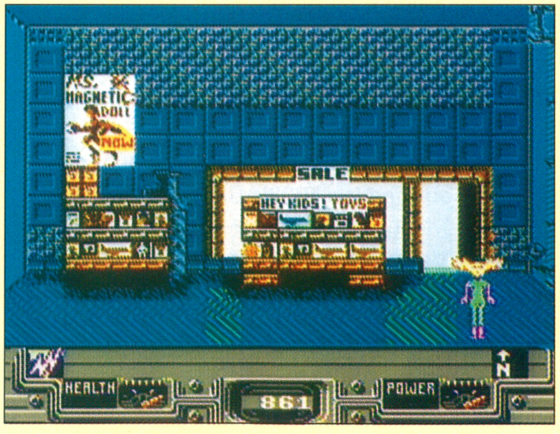
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Produced by Lucasfilm Games, *Defenders of Dynatron City* has a whimsically irreverent feel to it, like the company's *Maniac Mansion* and *Monkey Island* computer titles. *Dynatron* casts off-the-wall superheroes in a plot to save Dynatron City from Dr. Mayhem's terrorizing robots. The Defenders must rid them from streets and buildings and stop the mad doctor from making himself emperor of Dynatron.

You control four Defenders, switching from one to another when needed. Three of these heroes are Toolbox, Monkey Kid and Buzzsaw Girl. Toolbox, a literal hammerhead, destroys Mayhem's robots by smashing them with his head. Monkey Kid, a "super-monkey," throws deadly bananas. With a circular saw blade for a lower body, Buzzsaw Girl slices robot metal by backflipping on them or throwing saws.

This trio is helped by a fourth hero, which you can choose from three equally quirky types: Jet Headstrong, who flings his head at enemies, Ms. Megawatt, who zaps them with electric bolts, and—my favorite—Radium, the radioactive wonderdog.

Lucasfilm's *Defenders of Dynatron City* has a whimsically irreverent feel to it, like *Maniac Mansion* and *Monkey Island*.





continued on page 42

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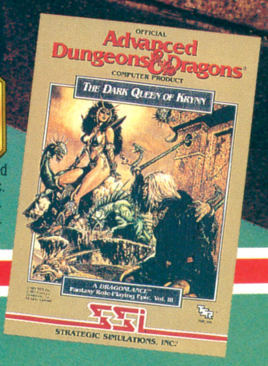
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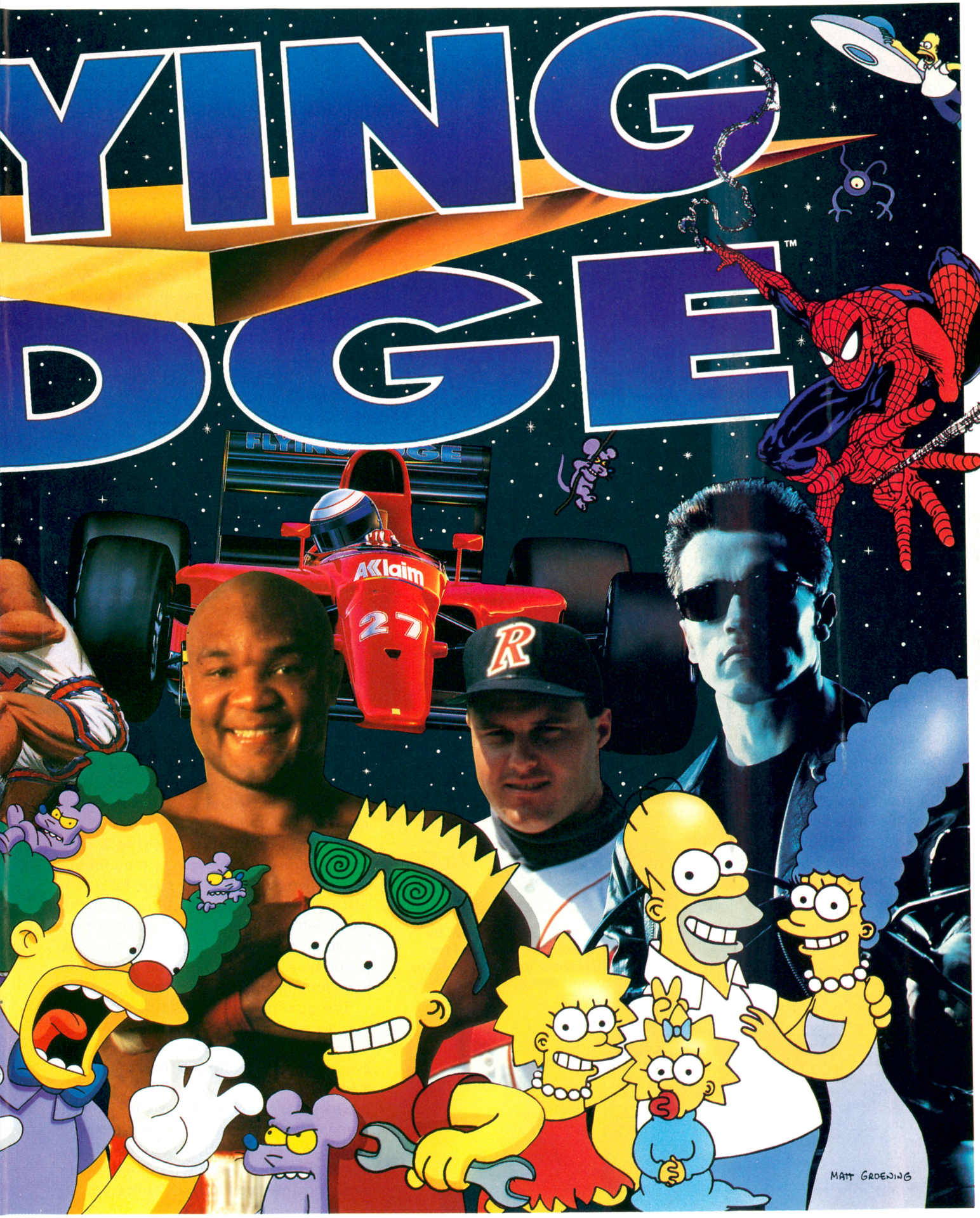


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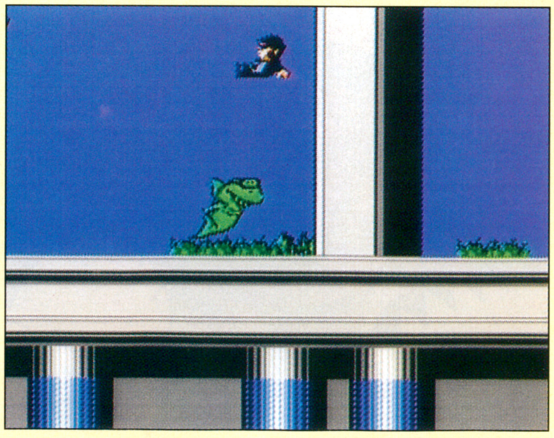
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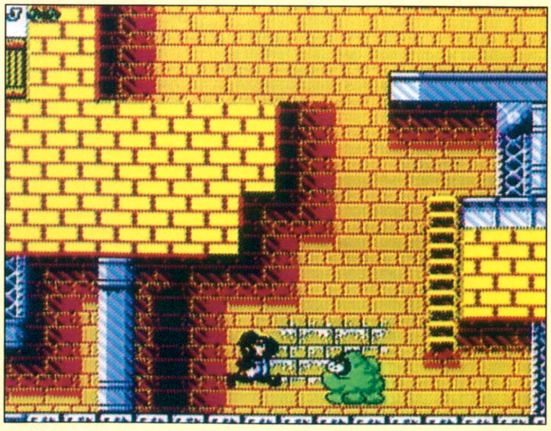
The action starts on the streets of Dynatron, where you destroy attacking robots—and parked cars in the way or just for fun—with your selected Defender. Once a street is cleared of robots, your hero can enter the abandoned buildings and search for items to increase life and power levels. Some items give your character new superpowers.

Gather some dollars and you can, in the spirit of consumerism, visit the mall to buy CDs, pizzas and athletic shoes. Possessing this stuff increases your levels, but robo-dinosaurs staking out the place must be dealt with first.

The other stages of the game take place in the sewers of Dynatron and Dr. Mayhem's base of operations, the city's Proto-Cola plant. A stage ends after you accomplish a mission objective, like blowing up a blimp, blasting specified robots to pieces or destroying whatever needs to be reduced to scrap. Defenders whose life levels drain completely are "captured" and may be rescued later in the game.

Dynatron sounds unique, and it is. It just doesn't play that way at times. Initially, action is tepid, as you blow up robots on the streets, enter buildings and destroy whatever robots are inside. Later on there are some niceties, such as the Defenders fighting evil twins of themselves, but it's just more of the same dodging-and-shooting stuff. Though the game is difficult to finish in a few tries, the time it takes to complete the entire game seems awfully short. There's the head-numbing music that's less than heroic sounding and mucky backgrounds to note.





***The Blues Brothers*, by Titus, is scheduled for release on the Game Boy and SNES, as well as the NES.**

Evidenced by the fact that even "Mega Mall" is trademarked with the characters, *Dynatron* reeks of commercial potential for other entertainment media; an animated series and a comic book are being produced. But it seems this simultaneous marketing has affected the game negatively. *Dynatron* plays like one of those licensed games based on a hot property. You know, it's "okay," but not as cool as its derived-from idea.

Perhaps *Defenders of Dynatron City* is actually a take on so-so licensed video games just as its premise is on comic-book superheroes. This would explain everything.

—Howard H. Wen

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The Blues Brothers

TITUS

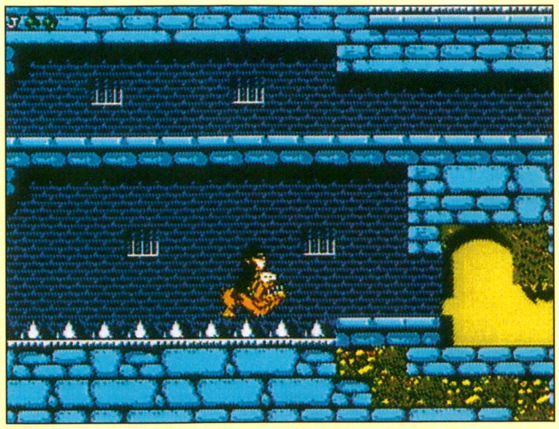
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

They're back. Fans of the classic *Saturday Night Live* shows will remember the antics of Jake and Elwood Blues, both from the TV show and from the movie that it spawned. *The Blues Brothers* movie not only featured the musical side of the pair, but also followed them in a race against time and the law as they fought their way to make it to the stage for a benefit concert. Although the end of the movie left some doubt as to whether they would be singing anything other than the prison blues, Jake and Elwood are back in town for another round.

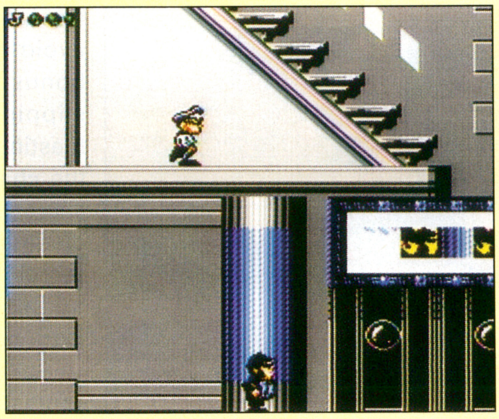
The goal is basically the same: Avoid the law and other pitfalls, and make it to the concert hall in time for the show. However, how you accomplish this differs substantially.

The basic scenario here is very familiar in many ways: You must make your way through several different levels by advancing through each scene, while avoiding the "bad guys." There are no



Gamers must avoid the law and other pitfalls, and make it to the concert hall in *The Blues Brothers*.

bosses to speak of, so the only objective is to just make it through the round in one piece.



Either one or two players may participate. (If one plays, either Jake or Elwood may be chosen, while, with two players, both are played.) In the two-player game, both characters are on screen at the same time and must coordinate their efforts to advance. Otherwise, it is possible for one player to be left behind and be subjected to off-screen dangers.

Neither player is equipped with a weapon. Your control is limited strictly to running and jumping, with a bit of crawling and ducking necessary at points. Occasionally, an overhead bird may drop an egg that may be knocked into enemies, but that is pretty much the extent of any type of offensive action.

Power-ups consist simply of 1-ups and health restoration. (Play starts with three lives and either three or two health marks for the one- and two-player games, respectively.)

The race to the concert is broken up into five chapters. The first has the Brothers making their way through a department store that just happens to contain birds, sharks and deadly "stars" (for lack of a better term), as well as the local deputies (I'd like to see the store this was modeled after). Next, our heroes shiver their way through a giant warehouse guarded by dogs, birds and—that's right—frozen peas.

The action continues on to a prison, where more guard dogs, coupled with the occasional giant spider, aid the local law dudes in making life difficult. An underwater underworld and a final, all-out free-for-all make up the last couple of areas, guarded by the aforementioned, along with a stray reptile to keep things "interesting."

Getting away from the story line for a moment, I must say that the musical background is excellent, and copies the Blues Brothers' theme song ("Can't Turn You Loose") very well—though I did miss hearing "Rawhide." The representations of Jake and Elwood are equally excellent, with both having a comical jiggle as they sprint along.

Unfortunately, things went downhill from there for me. As you may have perceived from the descriptions above, the mood of the game just doesn't fit with "deadly peas" and sharks. The background and enemy graphics don't impress, and, although the action gets difficult in the later stages, the story line just doesn't mesh well with the game. There isn't anything to really make this a distinctive game—take out the main characters and put in Jimbob and Joebob, and things wouldn't change much.

The Blues Brothers is scheduled for release on the Game Boy and SNES systems as well, both of which will look substantially different, from what I can tell. But as for this version? Take a look via rental to avoid singing your own blues.

—Brent Walker

Titus Software
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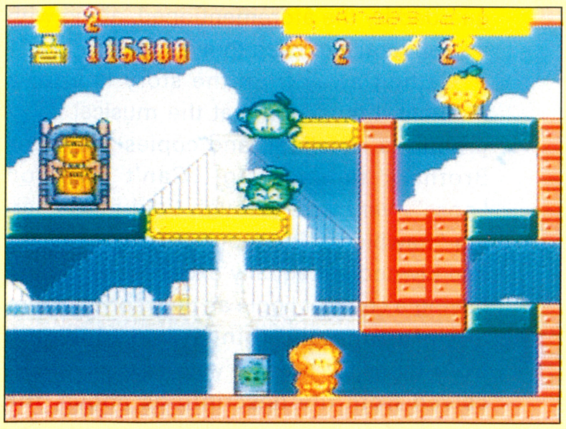
Spanky's Quest

NATSUME

For the Super NES ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Black was the day that the witch Morticia brought down the stones of her sky kingdom upon the heads of all who dwelled in Mopoland. Spanky the monkey had been on his way to a picnic when Morticia's bricks fell, forming huge towers that cast their black shadow over all the land. As things always get worse before they get better, Spanky now finds himself trapped in one of the towers. He is the unwilling guest of Morticia, who teases him with hope by telling him that, if he can make his way through all six of her towers and destroy



***Spanky's Quest*, by Natsume, is a fresh and original contest, unlike any you've ever played before.**

the guards in each tower, he and the rest of Mopoland can go free.

In *Spanky's Quest*, a new puzzlelike arcade game from Natsume, you control the silly simian as he tries to solve the mystery of every room in the six towers. Each tower contains nearly a dozen rooms through which Spanky must fight and struggle to the exit; so there are many puzzles indeed. You'll need brains as well as brawn to defeat Morticia.

Spanky has a most unusual weapon, a small ball that, when tossed into the air, can be changed into a variety of deadly shapes, which look suspiciously like baseballs, soccer balls, volleyballs and basketballs. To change the magic ball into one of the more deadly varieties, Spanky must throw it into the air and bounce it on his head. Each bounce causes the ball to increase in size. Then a quick tap on the controller's attack button will release it to do Spanky's bidding.

Each type of ball bops the baddies in a different way: Baseballs take out a single enemy; soccer balls and the exploding volleyballs can bounce out several enemies at once; and basketballs—the most powerful of the lot—are able to blast almost every creep on the screen.







But Spanky has more to work with than just magic balls. On his way through the towers, he can find several types of hats that increase his powers. Examples include the straw hat, which slows Spanky when he falls; the viking hat, which shields Spanky from danger; the top hat, which changes the magic ball into basketballs with one touch; and the baseball cap, which draws the magic ball automatically to Spanky's head.

Of course, like any puzzle-type game, each room requires a different strategy in order for Spanky to successfully collect the keys and exit. Climbing platforms to avoid attacking enemies, finding special bonus items, bouncing on spring traps, slipping and sliding on ice blocks and blasting open escape routes are all part of the challenge. Some rooms even contain secret doors, which can be revealed by blasting blocks with the magic ball. The secret doors lead to bonus levels in which Spanky can play a *Tetris*-like game for extra points.

Spanky's Quest is a fresh and original contest, unlike any you've played before. Spanky's unusual weapon takes a little getting used to, but, once you get the hang of it, you'll be glued to your control pad for hours on end. All in all, *Spanky's Quest* is a great way to "monkey around" with your Super NES.

—C.W.

Natsume
1243A Howard Ave.
Burlingame, CA 94010
(415) 342-1712

Gunboat

TTI

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Gunboat is a first-person "river warfare" simulator that's been translated from the popular Accolade version for home computers. (See Ed Dille's review in the July 1990 issue of VG&CE.) In this intensely moody Vietnam-era shoot-'em-up, you'll pilot a patrol boat through narrow rivers and channels, blasting the enemy's huts, ships and fortifications

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with a variety of powerful weapons.

One of the first things you'll notice about *Gunboat*'s control scheme is the unique method of switching from one of your three weapons to another. Believe me, it's not easy to figure out without looking at the instruction manual. Pressing the **I** button switches from a front view to one of the weapons, and the choice of weapon is actually determined by the setting of the three-position auto-fire switch above that button on the TurboPad. This can be a little confusing at first—particularly in the heat of battle, which is 99% of the time—but I really liked this innovative use of the existing hardware.

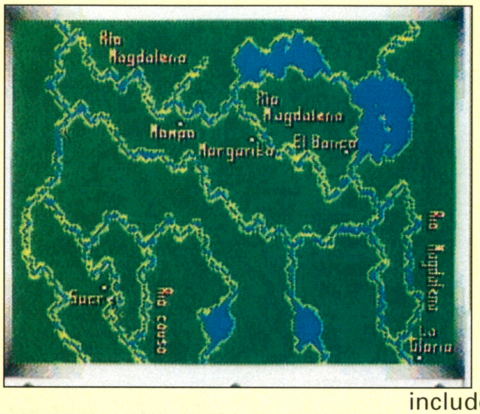
Unfortunately, there's a trade-off. Because the sliding auto-fire controls of the TurboStick can't be easily "locked in" to the same positions as those on the TurboPad, you can't use the TurboStick to play *Gunboat*. This flaw may be corrected in the final version of the game, but it still existed at press time.

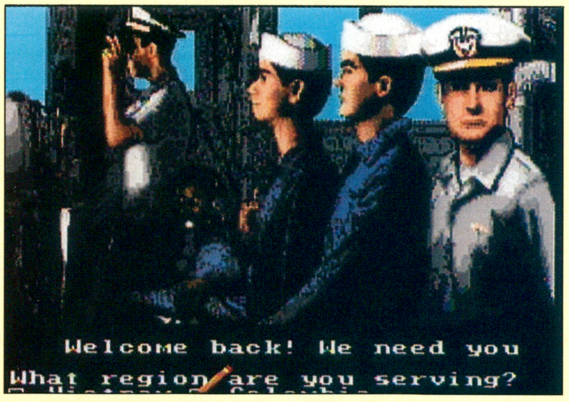
Though the graphics in the TG-16 *Gunboat* are not as detailed as in most computer versions of the game, they're still hauntingly atmospheric. The frame rate of the animation is fast enough to allow the polygon-fill graphics to really get you involved in each "mission"—which was a little easier to do in this case, since the majority of the action takes place only in the upper third of the screen.

Not that all players are going to enjoy the simulation of an experience that many Americans would rather forget, but the game uses an interesting technique to get inside your head and manufacture a suffocating sense of claustrophobia. Whenever your patrol boat is in danger, the sky slowly fades to a ghastly blood-red hue and a buzzing noise swells to signal the oncoming attack. It almost makes it seem as if your ears are ringing from the adrenaline rush; it's like a subconscious voice telling you, "Get your head down, you idiot!" Stirring stuff—and very involving.



***Gunboat* for the TG-16 is a first-person "river warfare" simulator that's been translated from the popular Accolade computer version.**







The game's soundtrack is varied and interesting. The sound effects are chillingly realistic, the digitized weapon sounds are tremendously powerful and the shrieks of wounded soldiers on both ends of every exchange are almost too intense. The music behind the title screen also earned some brownie points from this reviewer. I'm a sucker for any video game that includes a rendition of Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*—that's how I got hooked on the *Satan's Hollow* coin-op.

If the powers-that-be insist on translating computer titles to the TurboGrafx-16 format, instead of bringing over some of the more interesting Japanese PC Engine games, it would be in their best interest to make sure that they're all as well done as *Gunboat*.

—Chris Bieniek

Turbo Technologies Inc.
6701 Center Drive West, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310) 641-4622

Raiden Trad

ELECTRO BRAIN
For the Super NES ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Another shooter, eh? Anybody for an old-fashioned shooter? How about you there, fellow? Your arthritis doesn't look too bad, yet. Okay, so terms like "innovative" and "new and improved" won't apply here. No, it doesn't even use a light bazooka.

Raiden is, of course, the offspring of its arcade parent, which has been feasting upon quarters for well over a year or so now. There is always room for another good game, however, and *Raiden* has some challenge and variety to offer that is worth looking at.

Your mission should sound familiar: Pilot your ship through several landscapes that scroll down the screen toward you and basically do whatever it takes to stay alive.

The landscapes scroll down the screen from top to bottom, and moving your ship to the extreme left or right will scroll in the respective direction a short distance, giving a total overall screen width of perhaps one-and-a-half times your TV screen.

Either one or two players can play through eight missions. A configuration menu provides you with the choice of: starting with two to five men and bombs, playing at one of five skill levels and turning auto-fire on or off— great for those of us with the arthritis already kicking in. For those who really enjoy the game's soundtrack, the background music and sound effects may also be accessed from this area (at least in the version I was presented for review).

On the subject of power-ups, there are really only four to speak of. The two standard weapon choices consist of a screen-spanning type of weapon or a strictly straight-ahead laser weapon. Both have the ability to increase in power as additional power-ups are found. In addition, there are two types of missiles: Homing missiles track down enemies to deliver their payload, while the standard missiles just zip straight up the screen. These may be increased in number in the same fashion as the other weapons.

Other miscellaneous power-ups include extra bombs, 1-ups, medals and a special weapon power-up that will push your weapon to maximum strength. These are self-explanatory, except for the medals, which are simply bonus items that award extra points at the end of each level.

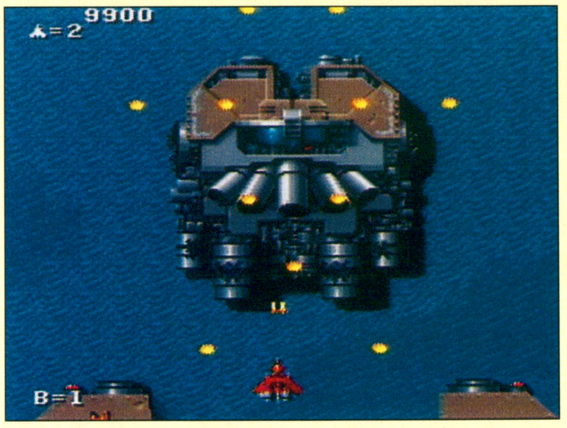
Actual game play is, again, very familiar—proceed through each level, blasting a gaggle of ground targets and the many flocks of flying enemies that swoop down the screen toward you. There isn't a wide variety of targets, but there are enough different ones to provide some diversity. A boss awaits at the end of each level, accompanied by the appropriate warning music, and consists of either a ground structure or a flying behemoth that spews out bullets by the bushel. Here is where those bombs that you've been carrying around with you will come in handy.

The scenery for the levels closely resembles the arcade version, even perhaps too much so. The graphics are faithful, of course, but in comparison to newer games, aren't particularly impressive. The landscapes vary between desert, water, industrial and space backgrounds, but, again, are somewhat average. The enemies are somewhat more interesting, however, and are adequately done.

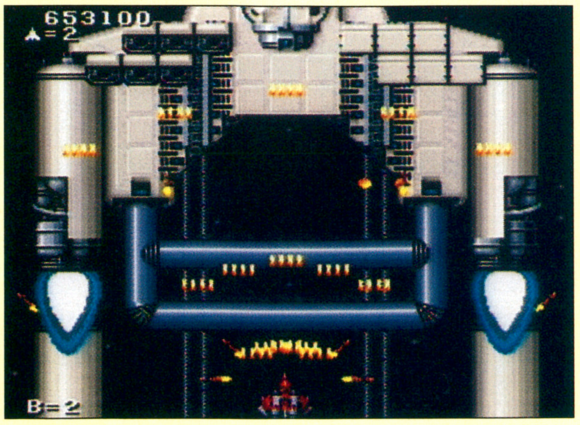
The soundtrack is okay, with some variety and change throughout, though the sound effects are fairly limited.

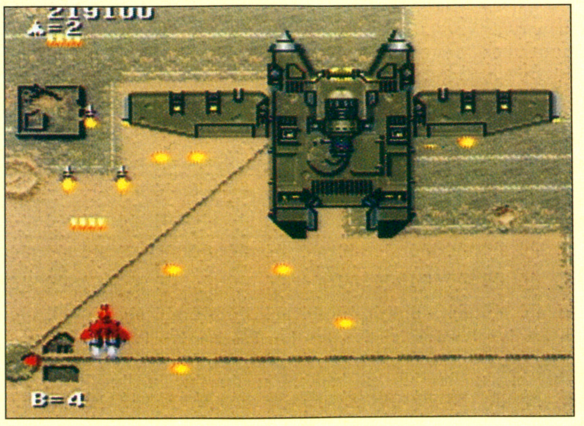
The choice of five skill levels is the one thing that will appeal to many. It allows players to work their way up to the hardest level, while avoiding the frustration that often accompanies the climb in difficulty. This feature will also allow younger players to make some progress with-

***Raiden Trad*, by Electro Brain, is the offspring of the arcade parent, which has been out for about a year now.**











Acclaim's *Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge* is concentrated more on the actual racing game than the nice little extras.



out being wiped out immediately. This, coupled with the one continue allowed, will allow just about anybody to view everything that *Raiden* has to offer.

Although there just isn't anything very different to distinguish *Raiden* from other, older shooters, don't let that alone be a reason not to give the game a look. Solid game play never hurt any game, no matter the genre; and—though of a well-worn type to be sure—*Raiden* does have that.

—B.W.

Electro Brain
573 E. 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
(801) 531-1867

Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge

ACCLAIM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($47.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

As the title implies, there's only one kind of formula racing car you can drive here—that of the famous Italian sports car company with a stallion for a logo. You can choose either an automatic transmission or a three-gear stick shift, but that's it. Just

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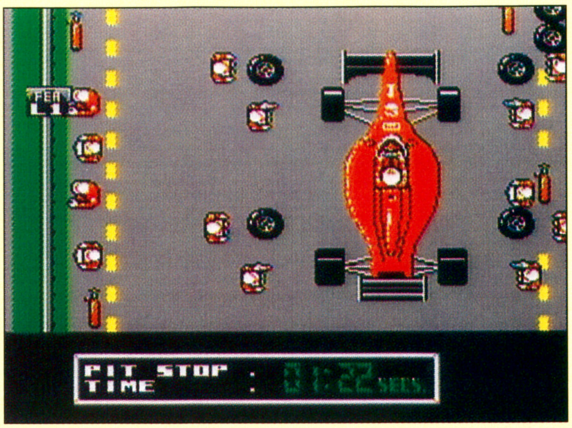
one car and its one color: red. Immediately, this lack of choice marks up one minus for this racing game. It would be nice if other types of Ferrari formula racers were available.

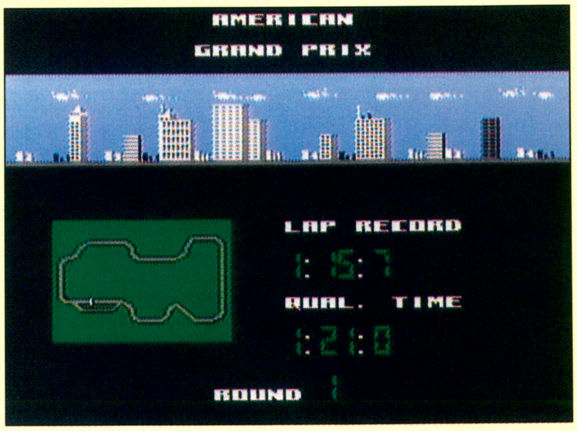
But, as soon becomes apparent, *Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge* is concentrated more on the actual racing than the nice little extras. Sixteen courses, designed from the layouts of real-life counterparts, make up the entire racing tournament. Before you're allowed to race, you must qualify by speeding your car around the track within a set time.

If you qualify, your place at the starting line is determined by the time it took you to complete the course. The actual race has you competing against other, computer-controlled racers for the coveted first, second and third places. Placing will grant you money rewards. Not finishing the race in an adequate place will earn you practically nothing, and could disqualify you from the entire grand prix.

The tires on your racer will eventually wear down (even more quickly if you drive off the course), and they will need replacing at the pit stop. You control the pit crew by pressing the A and B buttons on the control pad. Time is essential, so the faster you alternate pushing the buttons, the sooner the crew will change out your car's tires.

Oddly enough, your tires never wear down to the point where they blow and make you lose control of your racer. Really





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worn tires only slow you down. In fact, colliding with other racers just slows you down, too. Thus, sadly, no spectacularly violent explosions or car pileups happen here. Like I said, this game is more concerned with its racing aspect.

After racing on the more complex courses, it is soon obvious that you must learn to drive the three-gear stick car. While the automatic version is much easier to handle, its shifting adjusts too slowly. You can't even qualify on most of the courses beyond the second one with it. Clearly, the automatic is meant to train the first-time player.

While it's not padded with glorified aspects, *Ferrari Grand Prix* displays some of the cleanest and most effective graphics seen in an NES racing title. Though things look simple, notably the pit crew graphics, the game's animation and winding race course rival that of the venerable *Rad Racer*.

That old *Rad Racer* game remains a favorite with longtime NESers. Lots of racing titles have come, but many are forgettable. Only *Rad Racer* has survived to become a classic. *Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge*, on the other hand, is likely headed for that oblivion where a lot of NES games now rest; but this no-fuss racer still deserves at least one good look.

—H.H.W.

Acclaim Entertainment
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-2400

Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?

ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

One reason that parents may still be buying the NES for the kiddies is the amount of educational software available. While there are dozens of educational (or borderline educational) games out for the NES, Genesis only offers...uh...well, of course there's... ummm...ahem. Maybe *Art Alive* is kinda sorta educational, but that's it.

Now enter the first truly educational cart for the Genesis, *Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?*, the fourth in Brøderbund's celebrated line of *Carmen* computer games. While there are no surprises in this translation, it's good, wholesome fun that gives snippets of educational material in a nonviolent environment.

As a fledgling detective for the Acme Detective Agency, you've been assigned to apprehend Carmen Sandiego and her gang of creeps. They've stolen a time machine and have been jaunting around the world through history, stealing everything from priceless art from the Louvre to an opera singer's vocal cords. With your handy-dandy Chronoskimmer, you follow in hot pursuit. You're sent to the scene of the crime (anywhere in the world, any time period from 400 A.D. to the 1950s) with no information except for the sex of the suspect.

Every time you land in a new country/era (there are over 40), you either scan for physical evidence or you question witnesses and informants. The latter technique sometimes nets you clues to the suspect's identity—eye color, hair color, favorite author or artist, etc. Identity clues are important, since there must be a properly issued warrant for your arrest to stick.

***Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?* is the first truly educational game to appear on the Genesis.**









Most often, though, you're given clues about where the suspect has fled. There are only a few possible escape routes the suspect can take from any one location; the clues often give you enough information to deduce the country outright. For instance, you may be told that the suspect "said she was going to attend the opening of the first Shinto shrine," and if the available escape routes are Italy, Japan and Holland, you can make a pretty good guess as to where she went. But if there are two different possible eras of Japanese history, you'll need to discover the date of the opening of the shrine. Since you're given limited use of your Chronoskimmer for each case, traveling to an incorrect location or era can use up enough time to botch your assignment. Mistakes in this game are extremely costly; it pays to do your research rather than guess.

The research is facilitated by the inclusion of a paperback edition of *The New American Desk Encyclopedia* in every box. This is an excellent little desk reference, and it seems to include every shred of information the game requires. One of the side benefits of *Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?* is that you not only learn about geography, history, authors and artists, but you also learn—painlessly—how to use an encyclopedia to research unfamiliar topics.

Educational content aside, the game is extremely repetitive, yet there are more than enough esoteric clues to keep even adults from achieving higher levels without a lot of thumbing through the encyclopedia. It's also unique in that you can play in any of five languages. A full career, from Time Cadet to Super Time Sleuth, takes 80 *successful* cases. (Carmen herself only appears at the very end of the game; all of the other crimes are carried out by her cronies, who have cute names like Minnie Series and Ernest Endeavor.) As you progress, cases get more difficult, allowing even less room for error. A password feature allows you to save your detective ranking and the number of cases you've solved.

Graphically and aurally there's neither a lot of flash nor much variety. With only a few sound effects (which are excellent nonetheless) and a handful of cute but sparingly animated graphic sequences, don't expect to be overly impressed. It's the content that makes the game.

This is a clever and addictive educational game that should satisfy those who want something far more creative and worthwhile than *Raymond the Razor Takes on the Crips*. Each individual case only lasts a few minutes, so they're like potato chips: Betcha can't play just one.

—Josh Mandel

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS



Jaleco's *Rival Turf* consists of six levels of combat, each level having three short sublevels.

Rival Turf

JALECO

For the Super NES ($64.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Rival Turf is another in the increasingly popular "Let's walk to the right and bash in everybody's skulls" genre that originated with *Double Dragon*. Once more, somebody's been kidnapped, and you're on a rescue mission. Who's been kidnapped? Can you guess? Is it...your *dog*? Is it...your *parents*? No, it's your *girlfriend!*

Now, c'mon, don't look so surprised.

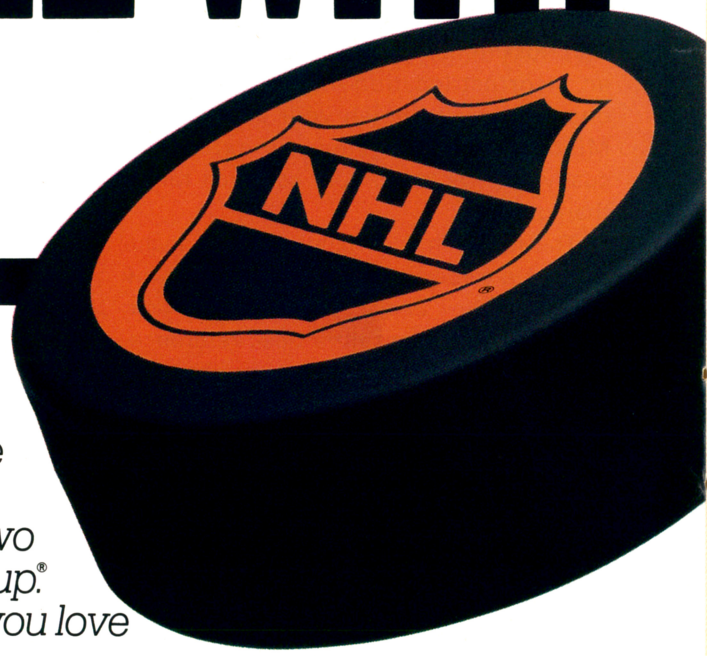
An unfortunate hallmark of these games, no matter who the publisher, is that imagination is absolutely forbidden. They're more alike than any two *Super Mario* games. You walk to the right, enemies jump out, you kick, punch and slam



continued on page 54

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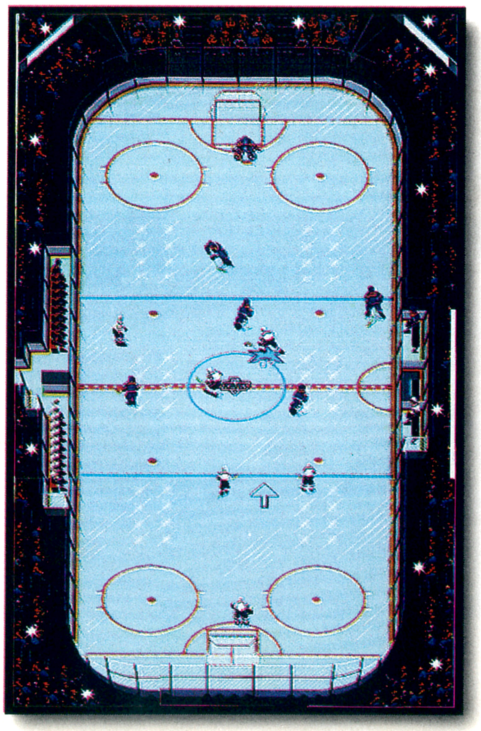
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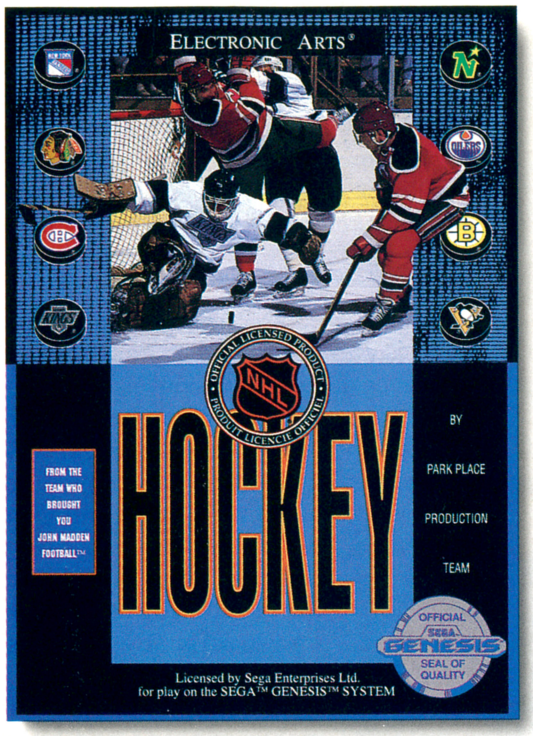
Every skater is modeled on 14 different attributes, like skating, strength, and rink awareness, based on 1990-91 stats.



As you can see from this composite screen shot, there's more action than you can shake a stick at.



Your goalie has as many saves as the Red Cross. Kick saves, glove saves, stick saves. You can even pull him for an all-out assault.



There's total player control, too. Take ballistic slapshots, execute sly backhands, flick passes to teammates; make great kick, glove, or stick saves; slash, hook, trip, high stick, or check the living daylights out of the other guy.

But if you step over the line, the refs will penalize you. Then cool your skates in the penalty box.

The goal of the game is to skate and score your way to the Stanley Cup. To get there, you'll face-off against every obstacle the pros do.



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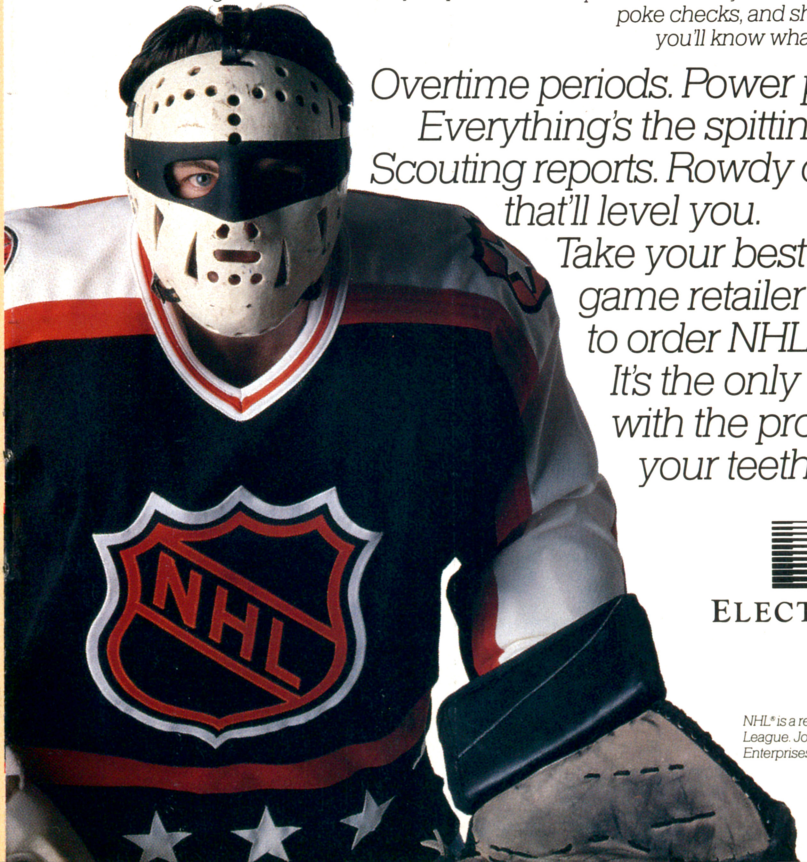
If you have all the right moves, you get invited to the big dance—the Stanley Cup Finals.



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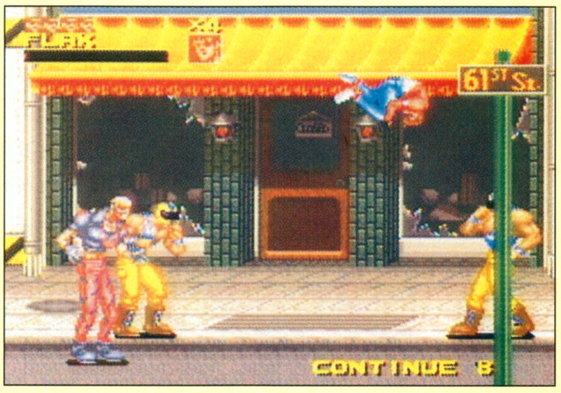
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continued from page 51

your way through them, aided occasionally by a weapon or a bit of nourishment to stave off impending death. Each level has an end boss of immense strength and a different scrolling background so you can tell one level from another.



The only real questions of difference are: How big are the characters, how many martial-arts moves can they do and how many people can play at once? In *Rival Turf*, the characters are huge, more than half as tall as the screen (much larger than the competing *Streets of Rage* on the Genesis). They're about on par with *Final Fight*'s characters. The martial-arts tally: only about half a dozen moves each, which is more than enough for most players.



There are two characters you can play: Jack Flak and Oozie Nelson. Jack's lean and mean, while Oozie is slower and heavier. Two players can play at once in a "you and me against the world" scenario. A third mode pits you against the other player in three rounds of battle.

Rival Turf consists of six levels of combat, each level having three short sublevels. The first three levels take place in Los Angeles, and the second three are in South America, where the drug lords hang out. The backgrounds are beautiful: Most feature at least a couple of planes of multilevel scrolling for 3-D effect, and there are a lot of big set pieces that move around, such as cars and helicopters. One sublevel even puts you on a moving bus (yes, this version of Los Angeles has mass transportation, but you wouldn't want to be caught dead on it).

The martial-arts moves are fairly typical, except for the notable "special move" and the optional "angry mode." Special moves are highly effective, but their use is limited. For each five enemies you've eliminated, you can do your special move once. Since by midgame you can have crushed over 100 enemies, that'll let you use the special move a lot toward the end of the game, where the enemies are significantly harder. Angry mode is an option: Turn it on before you start, and, if enemies gang up on you, you'll turn invincible for a few seconds, just long enough to extricate yourself (your attacks are also especially effective while you're in angry mode). It's a good feature for casual players, but it makes the game too easy for experienced players who may finish this game in the first four hours anyway.

All this high-powered animation comes at a heavy toll of speed. Frequently in a two-player game, or whenever you have four or more characters on screen at once, count on major slowdowns. Especially with Oozie, who's slow to begin with, you'll find your jumps and kicks looking less like a fast kick-boxing film and more like an underwater ballet. The sounds are terrific: a vast array of grunts and groans, meaty punches and kicks and the inevitable death moans. There's also a good variety of music, with different themes for each level, but somehow it all sounds nearly identical (try the music check if you don't believe me).

One last caveat: The game is too short. Like similar games, massive amounts of character and background animation usually result in a smaller overall game. Martial-arts game fanatics will definitely finish this one in the first day or two.

—J.M.

Jaleco USA
310 Era Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 480-1811

Stanley: The Search for Dr. Livingston

ELECTRO BRAIN
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($41.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Stanley is video gaming's answer to the historic question, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" Obviously, you're Stanley—Henry M. Stanley, reporter for the *New York Herald*. And you're to journey into Africa in

search of Dr. David Livingstone (note to game designers—his name actually ends with an "e"). He's the famed Scottish medical missionary and African explorer, and he's missing. This is *Hank and Dave's African Adventure*, if you will.

Your quest begins in Port Harken, located east of the continent. Irritating bagpipe music that would make any Scot's ears bleed blares as you gather supplies and weapons before venturing into the hazardous jungle. The city's populace is also a source of helpful information, as some of them saw the good doctor before he mysteriously disappeared.

Buildings may be searched for items you can use. You get three lives at the beginning and a limited amount of strength energy. So care must be taken when trying to take things that are guarded by dangerous animals or natives wearing masks.

Once you leave Harken, a map of the continent comes up, and you select the next area you want Stanley to move through. The bagpipes cease and are replaced with equally lame—though not as irritating—tribal drumbeats, as Stanley travels into the jungle. Lots of things are out to do in poor ol' Stan, and the giant spiders, snakes, bats, man-eating plants and other hostile beings are more than happy to oblige.

A number of the jungle settings have underground passages inviting Stanley to explore. Naturally, they're filled with creatures hungry for explorers, but items are to be found anywhere that can restore health, enhance strength, give you a new weapon or grant other jungle-trekking per diems. Bottomless pits must be watched for, since falling into them guarantees Stanley's demise.

Stanley can punch enemies, but this proves to be a weak offense most of the time. Throwing spears or knives is more effective, if you can find some to use, of course. The spry little fellow is even equipped with a kind of helicopter backpack. Unfortunately, it is used to slow Stanley's descent—not for aerial transportation.

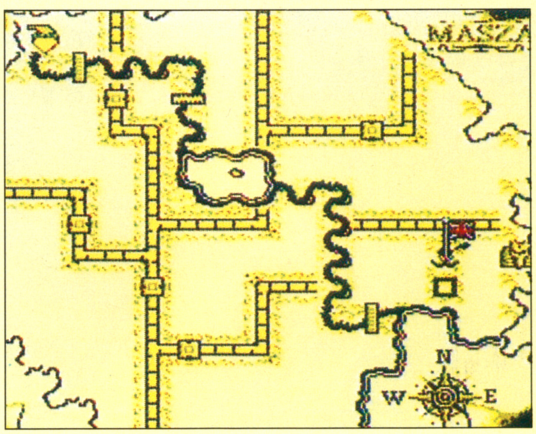
What we have here is a simple action-adventure game, but one that's not really in the *Castlevania* style. Actually, *Stanley* looks and plays a little like a computer adventure game from about ten years ago. I suspect gamers who are at least familiar with *Castlevania*-type slickness will be disappointed here. There's a happy bounce in every one of Stanley's running steps, but he's no Simon Belmont.

Yet *Stanley* earns credit for presenting history as the premise of an action video game. The objective is also refreshing—the search for a missing man, instead of "the Princess" or "Fabled Object." Still, *Stanley* is uneven. As with history in many school textbooks, it's interesting, but you wish it were presented with a tad more pizzazz, instead of being merely to-the-point.

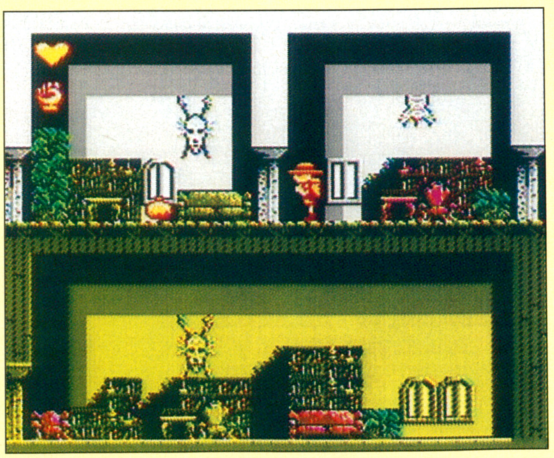
—H.H.W.

Electro Brain
573 E. 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
(801) 531-1867





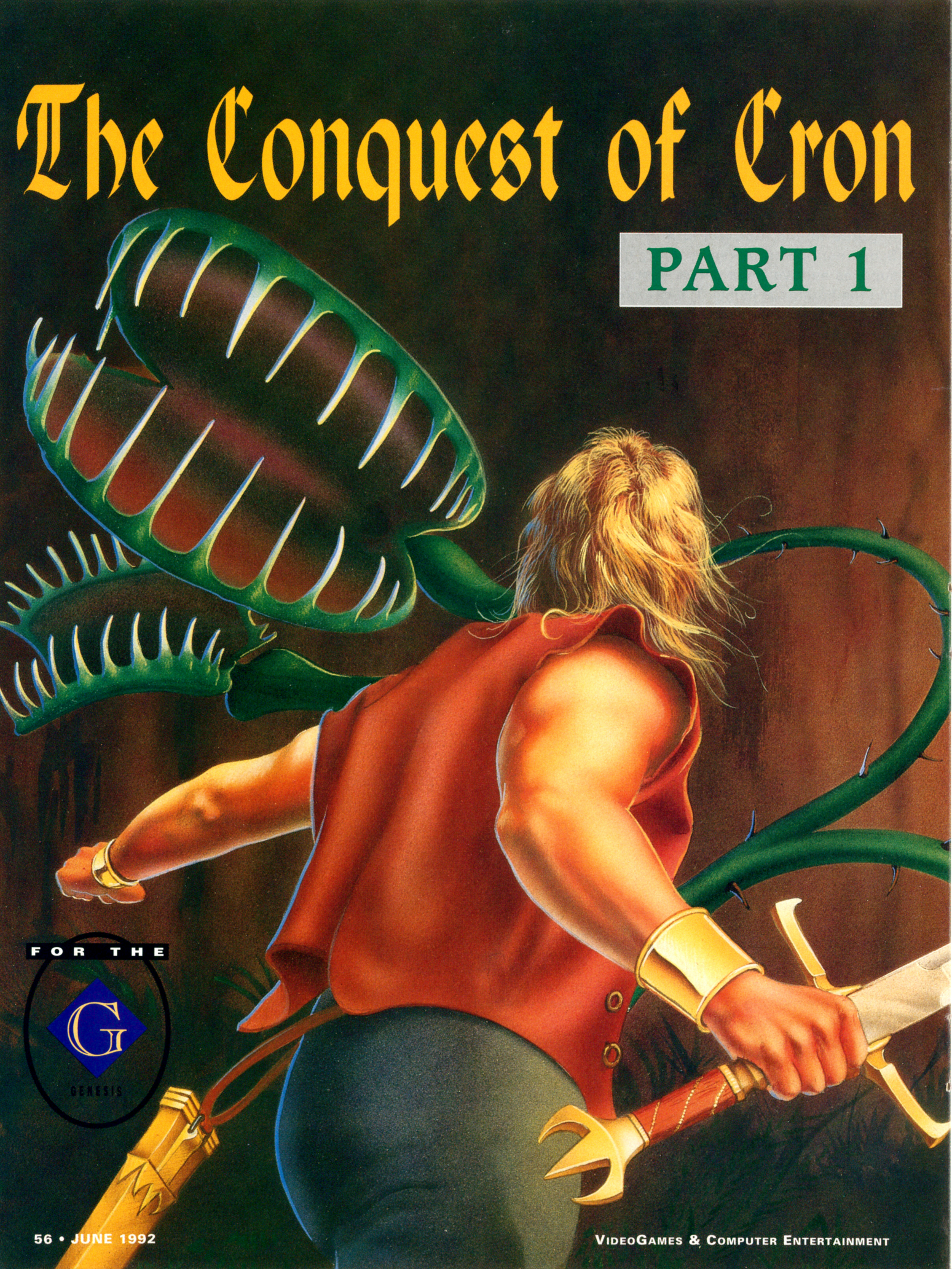




***Stanley: The Search for Dr. Livingston*, by Electro Brain, earns credit for presenting history as the premise of an action video game.**

The Conquest of Cron

PART 1



A Player's Guide to Might & Magic

Might & Magic for the Genesis is one of the biggest and best role-playing games on any game system. Its huge world, with dozens of areas to explore, guarantees a playing experience that'll keep you glued to your control pad for months. But, like any complex game, getting started can be a little tricky. With this article and the ones to follow, we'll try to get you over the worst hurdles, so you can get down to serious adventuring as quickly as possible.

We can't claim to have discovered every secret of this immense game (we're not even sure that's possible), but we can guarantee you'll have a great time. So grab your sword, shield and spell book. We're off for the experience of a lifetime!

by Clayton Walnum

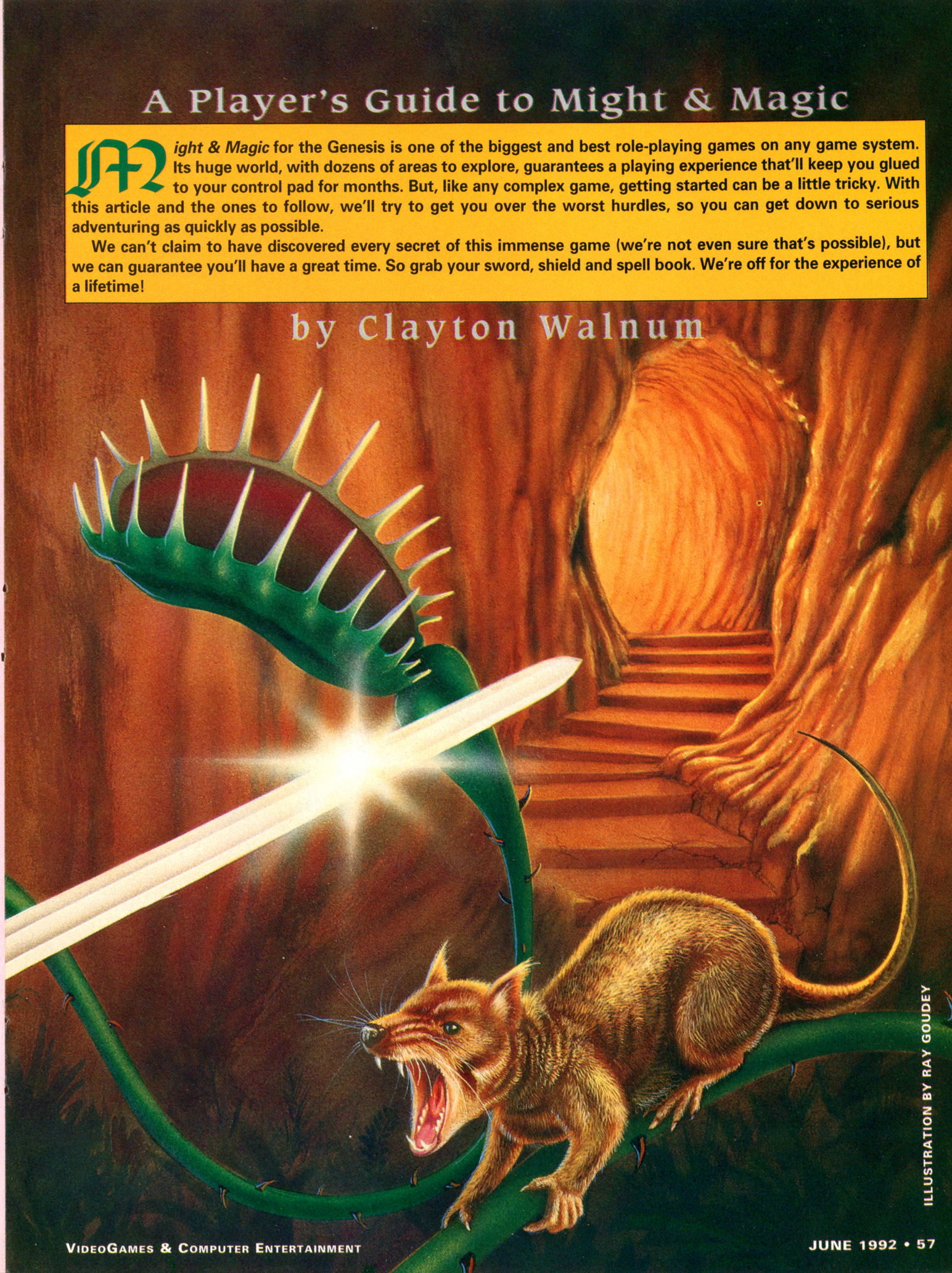
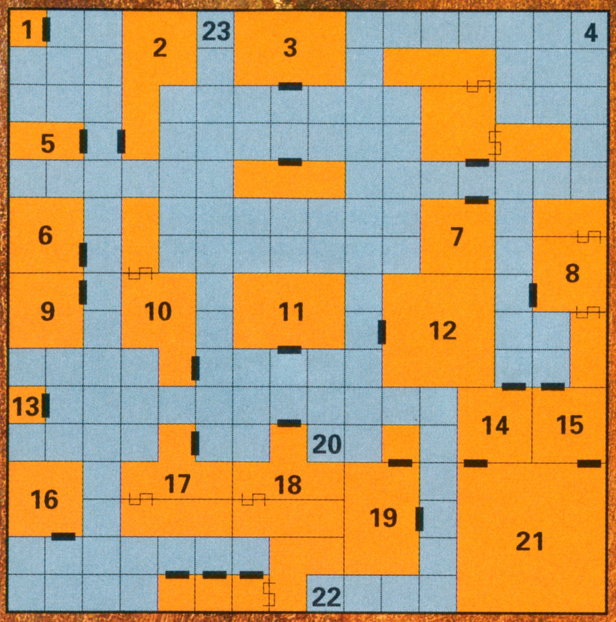


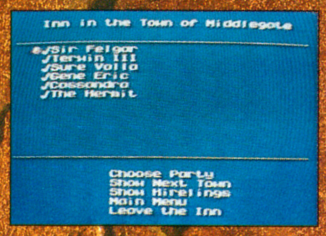
ILLUSTRATION BY RAY GOUDEY



Middlegate

1. Otto Mapper
2. Edmund's Expeditions
3. Sleepy Mage Guild
4. Feldecorb Fountain
5. Guild Membership
6. Track and Trail
7. Brain Detoxification
8. Travelmoore
9. Lock and Key, Ltd.
10. Slaughtered Lamb
11. Gateway Temple
12. Turkov's Training
13. Sandsobar Teleporter
14. Arena Entrance
15. Arena Exit
16. Mordonna
17. S.J. Blacksmith
18. Middlegate Inn
19. Nordon
20. Fountain of Clairvoyance
21. Arena
22. Cavern Entrance
23. Town Exit

▌ Door ⋮ Secret door X Message on wall



When you start the game, you can create your own characters, but the preset characters work great and get you started quickly.



Your adventure begins here at the Middlegate Inn.



Although your characters start with weapons in their inventory, those weapons are not yet equipped. Make sure to equip them before you get into any fights.



Right outside the inn, you'll find the Fountain of Clairvoyance. When you drink from the fountain...



The monsters in Middlegate may seem tough to inexperienced adventurers, but once your party gains some experience, you'll be kicking butt. Remember to save your game often. That way, if you die in a fight, you won't lose all the experience and treasure you worked so hard to get.



When in battle, remember to use your spells carefully. For example, the cleric's Turn Undead spell is great against skeletons, zombies, corpses and other walking dead. And don't forget the cleric's healing spells. You'll need them often.



...will try to gobble you up.



When a member of your party dies or is otherwise incapacitated, visit the temple to take advantage of its expensive, but necessary, healing services. Also in the temple, your cleric can get new spells.



After you gather some gold, you'll want to visit the blacksmith, where you can buy new weapons, armor and special items. You can also sell items you don't need. Before you sell an item though, make sure none of your characters need it.



If you look behind you, you'll see the innkeeper. Whenever you sign his registry, your game is saved. Make sure you save your game often, especially after doing or discovering something important.



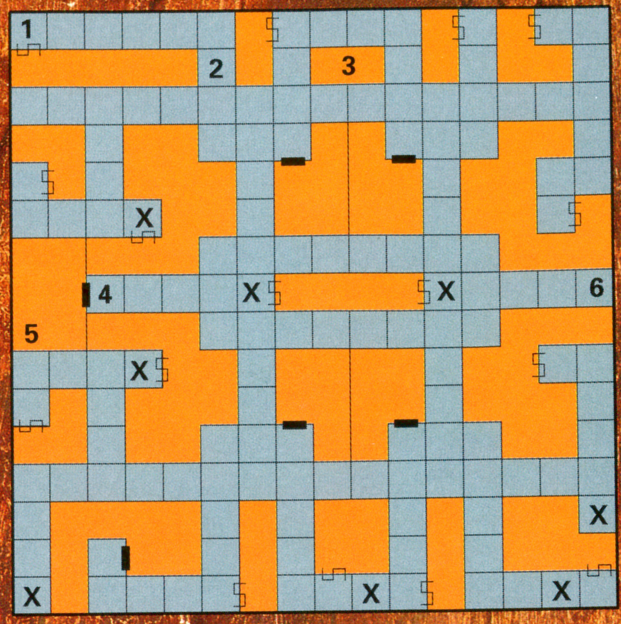
As you leave the inn for the first time, you see a mysterious messenger.



...a small map appears in the upper-right corner of your screen. This map makes it a lot easier to find your way around. Unfortunately, it lasts only one day, after which you'll need to drink from the fountain again.



Most of the buildings that have unmarked doorways contain monsters. Still, don't avoid these areas, since fighting is one of the best ways to gain experience and get treasure.



Middlegate Cavern

1. Torture Chamber
2. Kobold HQ
3. Clue
4. Goblin Lair
5. Golden Goblet
6. Exit

▌ Door ▯ Secret door X Message on wall



Your sorcerer also has some good spells, though you have to figure out which spells work best against which monsters.



After winning a battle, don't forget to use the search command to look for treasure.



Treasure chests usually contain gold, but they may also contain weapons, armor, special items and gems. The gems are especially important. Without them, you can't cast spells.



You'll meet many kinds of monsters in Middlegate. Some may try to steal your gold, while others...



At the many taverns you'll find throughout the game, you can hear interesting rumors. More importantly, you can buy the food you need in order to stay healthy.



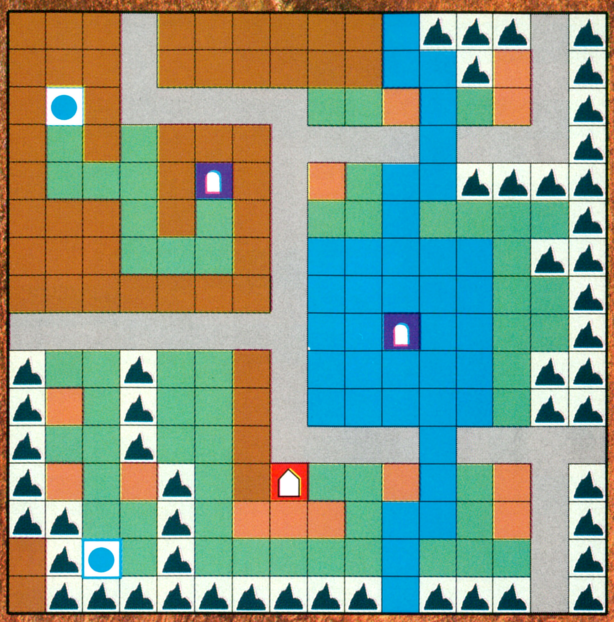
Every town has some sort of training arena where you can increase your levels.



After you've gathered some experience points, you should visit the arena and pay to be trained for the next level. The higher your level, the stronger your characters.



Your characters can also learn useful skills. This ranger in Middlegate teaches any character to navigate through the forest.



Region C2

Road
Grassland
Water
Light Forest
Heavy Forest
Mountains
Cavern
Fountain
Town



The town magician can sell you a membership in the local mage's guild. You have to join if you want to buy new spells.



Otto the mapmaker teaches you to make maps. After you learn this skill...



Every town has plenty to offer adventurers, and each town has a portal that'll take you to the next town.



In other towns, you can learn new skills at such places as The Sandy Dunes...



Because each party member can have only two skills at once, you may need to unlearn skills. You can do that at Middlegate's Brain Detoxification Center.



After you've done some exploring and built up your experience points, it's time to go on your first quest. Visit Nordon the Wizard to learn about this quest.



Your first quest takes you down into the caverns beneath Middlegate.



It's dark in the caverns...



Use the Auto-Map command often to keep track of your location.



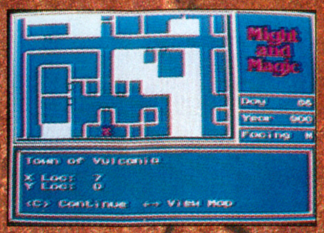
Look for fake walls that'll let you pass into otherwise inaccessible locations. But watch out for the monsters that lurk in these hidden areas.



You'll find several locked doors in the caverns, behind which lurks much danger.



The Goblin Lair contains the Golden Goblet, the object you need to find for your first quest.



...you can use the Auto-Map command to see the area you've explored. The map not only shows you where you are, but helps you keep track of where you've explored and where you haven't.



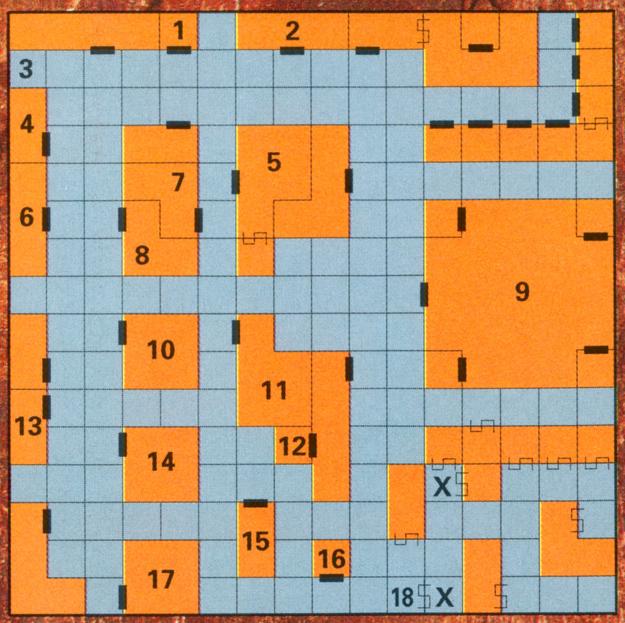
Another place in Middlegate where you can get an important skill is Edmund's Expeditions, where you'll learn to climb mountains.



...The Embassy...



...and Sly's Opportunities.



Sandsobar

1. Portal to Tundara
2. Big Al's Accessories
3. Gate
4. Guild Membership
5. Temple Benedictus
6. Empty
7. Red Lantern Tavern
8. Hourglass Inn
9. Monster Bowl
10. Sheik Training Arena
11. Whirlwind Mage Guild
12. Wizard's Eye
13. Sly's Opportunities
14. Embassy
15. Fitpro Locksmith
16. Portal to Middlegate
17. Sandy Dunes
18. Cavern Entrance

Door Secret door X Message on wall



...but, if you use a Light spell, you'll be able to see where you're going.



In the caverns, you'll find many messages on the walls.



You'll also battle some awesome monsters.



When you give the wizard the goblet, he'll give you a generous reward.



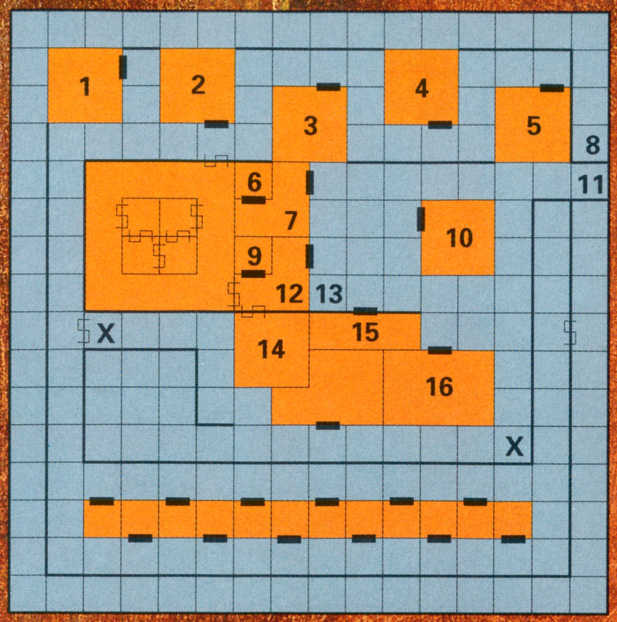
Then the wizard's wife, Nordonna, has a quest for you.



You must do a lot of fighting to rescue her sons.



But once you do, you'll get a reward. Nordonna tells you to donate at all the temples.



Tundara

1. Saracen's Denial
2. International Market
3. Columbus' Sextant
4. White Dove Temple
5. Mystical Mage Guild
6. Portal to Sandsobar
7. Tundaran Arms Inn
8. Button
9. Portal to Vulcania
10. Thundrax Weaponry
11. Gate
12. Lucky Dog Saloon
13. Newspaper
14. Stairs to Cavern
15. Guild Membership
16. Enhancement Center

▌ Door ▌ Secret door X Message on wall



All your adventure doesn't take place only in towns and caverns. You can go outside too. It's a big world out there!



Travel can be difficult in the wilderness if you don't have the right skills. To be able to penetrate the dense forest, two members of your party must have the pathfinder skill.



In the area outside of Middlegate, you'll find Corak's Cave, a place where your cleric's Turn Undead spell will be very handy.



To get into Corak's Crypt, where you can get the Lloyd's Beacon spell, you need to unlock the door...



When you get your ticket from the travel agent, you can board a special ferryboat that'll take you to the center of the lake, where you'll find the ruins.



After you've done a little adventuring, go on a tour of all the towns to see what they have to offer. Be prepared to meet up with some awesome creatures.



The Wizard's Eye spell is very handy. Get it here in Sandsobar.



Join every guild you can afford.



Then check out the local guild's spell offerings. You may not have a high enough experience to buy everything, but at least you'll know where to find what, once you have increased your experience.



Each town has a portal that'll take you to the next town.



Mountains, too, are impassable if you don't have the right skill. To climb mountains, two of your characters must have the mountaineering skill.



Although your characters cannot swim, they can cross this river by jumping on the ferryboat.



...and have the Admit 8 Pass.



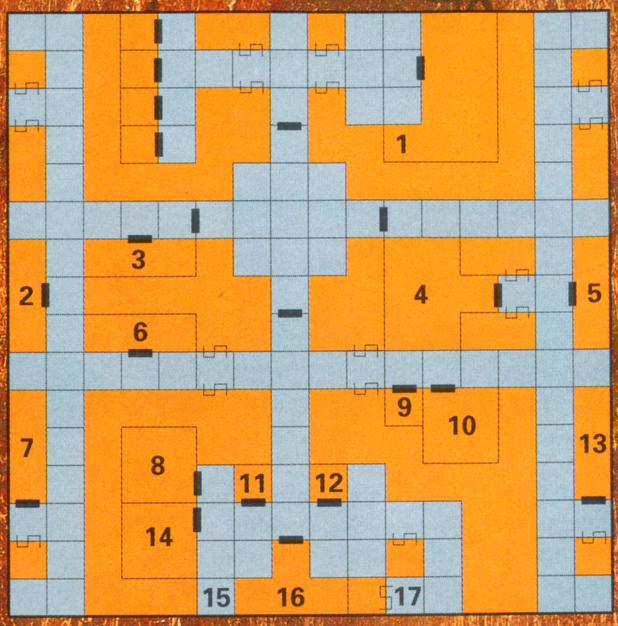
The area outside Middlegate also contains the ruins of Xabran Castle, but to get there you have to visit the travel agent in Middlegate.



Search everywhere. You never know what you might find.



Walls, too, can offer important information.



Vulcania

1. Lava Grenade
2. Lava Locksmith
3. Disembowelments R Us
4. Vulcan Temple
5. Bestway Blacksmith
6. Guild Membership
7. Sergeant Pain School
8. Training Academy
9. Resistance Scale
10. Blackrock Mage Guild
11. Portal to Tundara
12. Portal to Atlantium
13. Proficiency Expert
14. Belinthra's Bar
15. Gate
16. Hotel Four
17. Cavern Stairs

▌ Door ▯ Secret door X Message on wall



As you move from town to town, be prepared to take on some tough enemies. In other words, save your game often!



After your characters donate at every temple, you'll find a Fe Farthing...



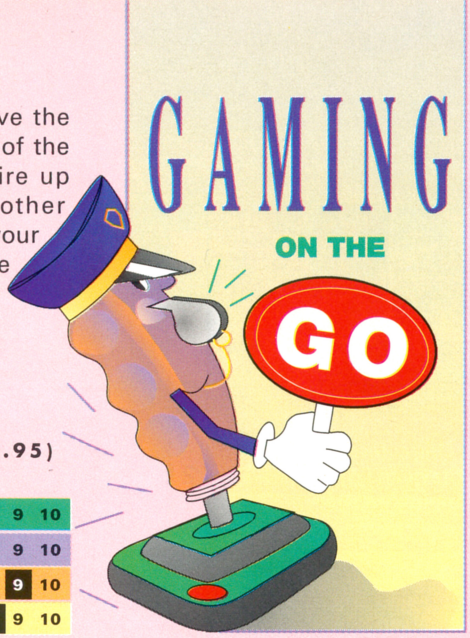
...which you can toss into a mysterious fountain back in Middlegate.



Then the fountain will give you the castle key.

Stay tuned next month for more maps and hints. Until then, happy adventuring!

GAMING ON THE GO



It's that time again...time to leave the tangled cords and cathode rays of the console systems behind and fire up those portable machines for another round of *Gaming on the Go*. Hope your batteries are charged up, 'cause here we go....

Crystal Warriors

SEGA

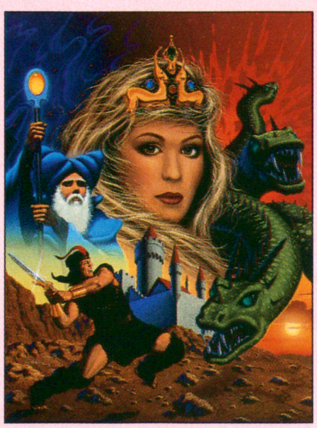
For the Sega Game Gear ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

Role-playing enthusiasts are sure to go bonkers over this one. Sega's latest Game Gear title is as close to a "real" role-playing game as I've seen on any of the portable systems. Unlike the majority of action-oriented *Legend of Zelda* clones that pass for RPGs in the world of video games, *Crystal Warriors* raises the traditional overhead-view adventure game to a new level of structured game play. Your party of six characters takes turns moving across the countryside, battling enemies and casting spells under the same set of rules you'd encounter in a Dungeons & Dragons session.

Most importantly, *Crystal Warriors* manages to enforce the conventions of a true RPG without losing itself in a quagmire of paperwork and dice-rolling. The colorful graphics and "exploding" windows are functional, yet stylish, and the player interface is smooth and natural enough to make you forget the mechanics of entering commands, fully involving you in the search for Arliel's magic crystals.



For all of the game's wonderful features and flawless execution, it's rather disappointing to learn that *Crystal Warriors* is much more linear than any such game has a right to be.



***Crystal Warriors* for the Game Gear is the closest to a full-fledged RPG that's come out for any portable game system.**





All you need to do is progress from one castle to the next—there's no decision-making involved in moving around on the map.

The unfortunate thing is that Sega was *so unbelievably close* to the perfect RPG. In last month's *Gaming on the Go*, Sega's *Ax Battler* just missed the mark, too—but on different grounds. If somebody would just sit down and combine *Ax Battler*'s story line with the control scheme and RPG rule book of *Crystal Warriors*...man, we'd be in for a real treat. Until that happens, consider *Crystal Warriors* to be a giant step in the right direction.

Sega of America Inc.
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800

Turn and Burn

ABSOLUTE

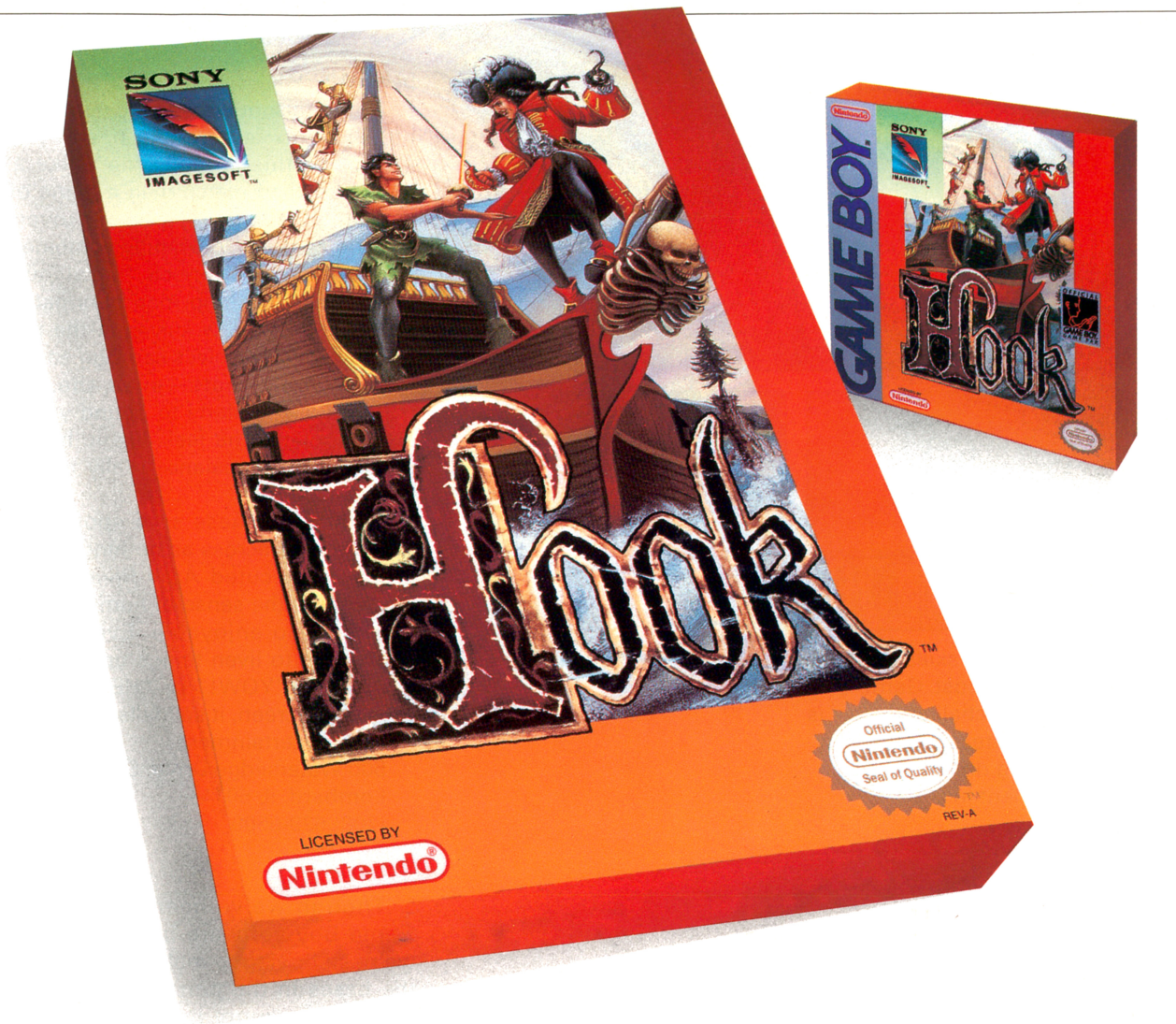
For the Nintendo Game Boy (N/A)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

VG&CE's portable-pick-of-the-month is Absolute's *Turn and Burn*, one of the first games of its kind for the Game Boy. With this detail-oriented "F-14 dogfight simulator," designers Dan Kitchen and Roger Amidon help to redefine the general public's opinion of the Game Boy and its capabilities. Of course, the Kitchen brothers have a long history of squeezing powerful software byte-by-byte into the least powerful system on the market—as anyone who played *Space Shuttle* on the Atari 2600 can attest.

It's safe to assume that certain minor details have been left out of the *Turn and Burn* experience. But most of the vital elements of a good first-person flying game are intact. The game includes takeoff and landing sequences, in-flight refueling, an "ejection" option and a full agenda of increasingly difficult "missions" for you to work your way through.

Though the beautifully detailed intermission screens are sure to attract all the attention in print ads and on the game box, the action on the main display is pretty intense, too. Aside from a shaded horizon line, there's not much happening in the background—but the game's furious bogey tracking and barrel rolling should keep you too busy to notice the lack of scenery. The instrument panel and long-range radar display are much more helpful than intrusive, thanks to a painlessly thorough instruction manual.

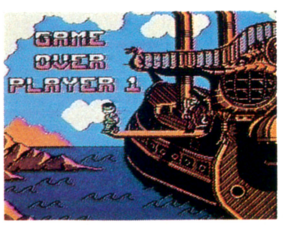


GET HOOKED!

You've just boarded Hook's ship. Your blood is pumping and a chill races down your spine. You're about to do battle with the most infamous pirate of them all, Captain Hook, the fiend who's kidnapped your children and sworn never to let them go. Suddenly Hook spots you and in one leap is at your throat. But with a quick spin you take flight over the sail and with a single thrust almost pin him to the mast. As Peter Pan, this is the fight of your life. Everything that came before — your duel with Rufio, your dive to the ship wreck, even your battles against the pirates and creatures of Neverland — are nothing compared to this moment. Hook, the video game. Multiple levels of incredible excitement. Fantastic graphics. Available now for NES and GameBoy. Get Hook. Before Hook gets you!



The most infamous pirate of them all



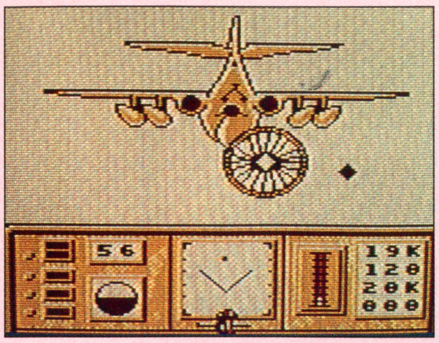
Walking the plank

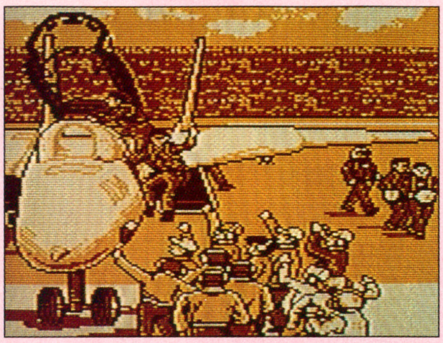
Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

LICENSED FOR PLAY BY Nintendo

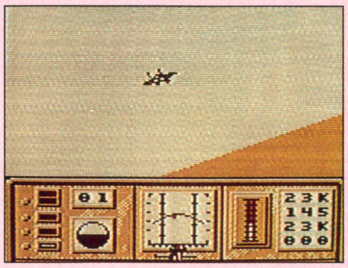
SONY IMAGESOFT™

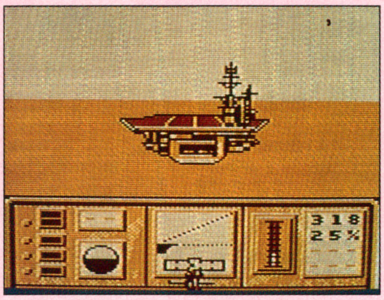
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The only thing I did not like about *Turn and Burn* is that some of the enemy fighters have incredibly advanced flying skills, even in the earliest stages. But most Game Boy owners will welcome the challenge; this is a hot contest that guarantees a lot of playing time for your gaming dollar.





Absolute's *Turn and Burn* is one of the first games of its kind to come out for the Game Boy.

Absolute Entertainment Inc.
251 Rock Road
P.O. Box 116
Glen Rock, NJ 07452
(201) 652-1227

Basketbrawl

ATARI

For the Atari Lynx ($34.99)

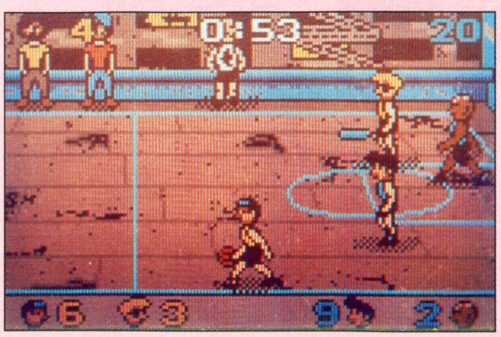
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

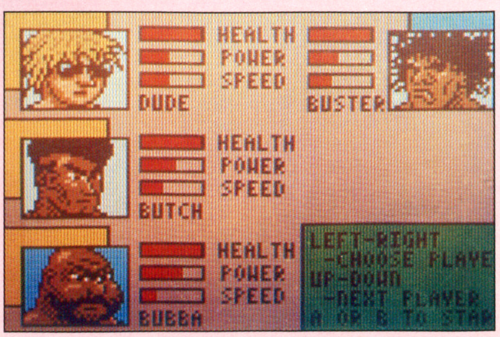
Like *Arch Rivals*, *Basketbrawl* for the Lynx combines full-court, two-on-two roundball with fisticuffs and flying limbs. In a one-player or ComLynx game, you'll control a player chosen from a motley crew of gangbangers whose fighting skills need to be as well developed as their ability to shoot hoops.

As you can tell by looking at the above number ratings, *Basketbrawl* is pretty weak—it's one of the least enjoyable Lynx titles to date. The characters are stiff, blocky and devoid of personality, and the animation is strictly third-rate. Heck, the ball doesn't even move or bounce in a realistic fashion. The soundtrack is deader than a doornail—with the possible exception of the title theme, a pounding tune that deserved a much better game behind it.

Atari's *Basketbrawl* for the Lynx is more of a tag-team wrestling match than a game of athletic ability.







Not to misunderstand the game's intent, but the Lynx is sorely in need of sports titles, and this is really more like a tag-team wrestling match than a game of skill and athletic ability. It's been proven that the two can be successfully combined, but *Basketbrawl* is too much "brawl" and too little "basket." Gang members patrol the sidelines and throw knives at the players; the players themselves can slug each other with baseball bats—even the referee comes out and starts to pound your character whenever he feels like it. It'd be fun stuff, but the imbalance really throws the game off course.

With all of these sore spots, *Basketbrawl* comes across as nothing more than a poorly executed *Arch Rivals* knockoff, but without the sense of humor that made the latter so enjoyable. Even when the game tries to liven things up by throwing blurbs like "YOW!" or "HE'S HURTIN'!" up on the screen, it still falls flat.

Atari Entertainment
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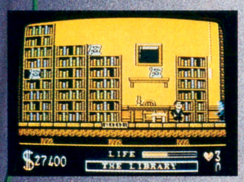
Though we've been inundated with Game Boy software in the past month, we're still trying to make sure we cover all the bases in the portable-gaming world. That means more Lynx and Game Gear action next issue—*in addition* to the generous Game Boy coverage you've come to expect from these pages. Give your eyes a rest now; we'll see you next month.

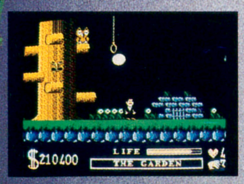
Reader feedback to this column is always appreciated. Send your comments and suggestions to: VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Computer owners with access to the DELPHI information service can also contact me via electronic mail sent to username VGCHRIS; or stop by the "World of Video Games" special interest group and drop me a note in the open forum.

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CIRCLE #133 ON READER SERVICE CARD

SUPERHEROES ON THE SCROLLING SCREEN

A Taste of the Transition From Colored Ink to Colored Pixels



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BY DAVID S. MOSKOWITZ

Fans of action comic books have two desires that all but the most haughty will admit to: seeing their favorite characters actually move and becoming a superhero. While the former has been possible for over 50 years with animation, anyone attempting the latter would be thwarted by the laws of science and finance, as well as the lack of super-villains. But software firms are now developing games that can simulate superpowers and stories on-screen, and their faithfulness to the original comic can often make or ruin the resulting game.

It was only fitting that Atari chose *Superman*, created in 1938 by Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster, for the first comic to video game translation. In the 2600 game, the Man of Steel had to put Lex Luther's gang in jail while searching for the pieces of the destroyed Metropolis bridge. Opposing him were kryptonite satellites that would sap his strength and ability to fly. With a strategy that would never appear in today's more politically correct games, only a kiss from Lois Lane could cure him—when he could find her, for she often wandered from "her place" at the *Daily Planet*. Using flashes of adjacent screens to simulate X-ray vision and simulated metro system to speed travel, *Superman* exemplified the innovative programming that kept the 2600 competitive against its more technologically advanced competition.

Bob Kane created *Batman* for DC Comics one year after *Superman*'s arrival to comics, but it wasn't until 50 years later that Tim Burton and Sam Hamm's 1989 movie helped the Dark Knight reach his all-time highest popularity. Besides generating $251 million at the box office, two soundtrack albums and thousands of T-shirt sales (ironically, many of them featuring, not the superhero, but his nemesis, the Joker), the film also launched Sunsoft's *Batman* video games.

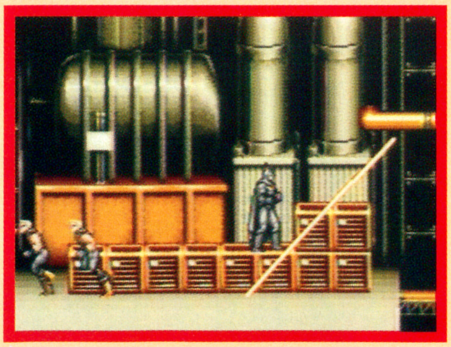
The first game, *Batman*, was officially based on the motion picture, in spite of its use of long-forgotten villains such as Killer Moth, while the sequel, *Batman: The Return of the Joker*, was based on the best-written and drawn of DC Comics' *Batman* books, *Legends of the Dark Knight*. Because many of the storyboards and graphics for the first game were taken directly from the movie, Sunsoft had little problem getting DC's licensing department to approve *Batman*. But, with the game's sequel, Sunsoft served as a relay station between the programmers in Japan and DC, who demanded that Batman's cape be shortened and that all weapons sound like tranquilizer guns; and, while game designers could utilize both comic and movie situations, the 1960s *Batman* television show was strictly off-limits. DC, like Warner Bros., its parent company and the movie's producer, feels that today's fans despise the pun-laden series, so it wouldn't even allow a bonus level in *Batman: Return of the Joker* that would feature the show's bizarre camera angles and coloring.

For comics fans, choosing between two *Batman* games is a tossup. *Batman* is ironically much closer to the comic, with its use of fists and "battarang" as primary weapons, and the wall jump—a clinging technique that always looked too odd to make sense in the comic books but works wonderfully in the game. *Batman: Return of the Joker*'s stunning graphics contain an impressive skyline rarely surpassed by the books, cartoons or movies. It's also more dependent on gunlike weapons than hand-to-hand combat.

Although critically acclaimed, Dave Stevens' comic book *The Rocketeer* was mostly unknown until the 1990 movie, and here varying degrees of faithfulness have spawned vastly different games. On the NES (from Bandai), the hero runs, jumps, flies and gathers fuel, medicine and ammunition for his arsenal: guns, grenades and even a bazooka. Although it's an enjoyable game, much of the book's appeal was that the hero lacked the rampant firepower seen in most action comics.

By contrast, in the PC version, getting approval from Disney Studios and Stevens to have the player use a gun was highly difficult—even though it is used in one of the five chapters composing the game. The chapters parallel, but do not duplicate, the movie's story line. To keep the PC game consistent with the movie and comic, members of Jim Simmons' design team, as well as Dave Stevens, were on the film's set. And, while both games feature comic illustrations in between stages, those on the computer version were drawn by award-winning Australian cartoonist John Dickson, a favorite of Stevens. In addition, by her request, the character Betty in the movie and computer game did not resemble model Betty Page, who was the comic's inspiration. For Super Nin-

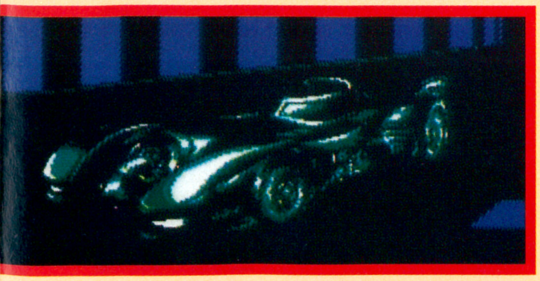
Sunsoft's *Batman* for the NES and Genesis is based on the 1989 motion picture that starred Michael Keaton.

















Sega's *Dick Tracy* contains interludes that keep it above other shooters.

tendo Entertainment System fans, the IGS version parallels the PC version.

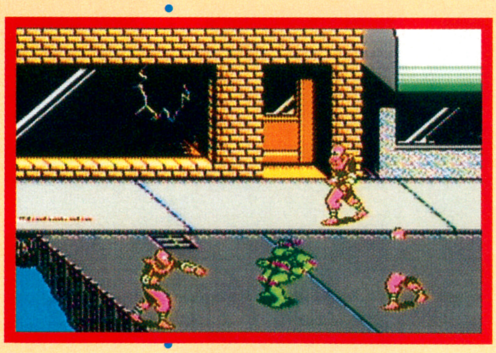
For those who prefer nonstop action, storytelling interludes are annoying at best, but they do enhance the gaming experience for comics fans; and, in *Dick Tracy* (Sega for the Genesis), interludes keep the game above the lower echelons of the jump-punch-shoot glut of games. Created by Chester Gould in 1931 and revitalized by Warren Beatty's 1990 film, the comic-book Tracy spent far more time investigating than fighting, and this is adapted in game time spent at the police station. While having to learn the "address" to the next action screen requires little deduction, it at least provides the illusion of genuine detective work. Unfortunately, the game, like the movie, made the violence more rampant than graphic, and omitted the best villains, such as the mind-controlling Evil Influence and the appropriately named Mrs. Pruneface.

Before the cartoons, toys, movies and pajamas, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles starred in a black-and-white comic book by Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman. Aimed at an older audience than their current one, the turtles were originally a parody of Marvel's Daredevil, with the humor being dry as well as silly. While Konami's first *Turtles* game (IBM PC and NES) at least included the bizarre creatures and a healthy dose of advice from Master Splinter, the arcade game and its NES adaptation are pretty, but a waste of time for comics fans. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Manhattan Missions*, the most enjoyable and graphically impressive of their releases, allows players to take combat lessons or rest in between missions, but still does not let them actively take part in the story line. While it might be somewhat futile to try to capture Raphael's savagery or Donatello's somber personality, the attributes are mostly meaningless, and it is the weapons that differentiate between the turtles. Still, it's a far better direction than shown in the arcade game.

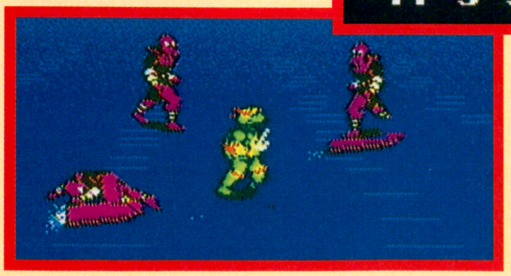
With the exception of the Incredible Hulk, most Marvel characters have had little exposure on TV or film. In fact, the recently completed *Punisher* and *Captain America* movies were not even released in American movie theaters. Nevertheless, Marvel's comics outsell all of its competition combined. Following a brief venture with Scott Adams' games, where Marvel produced poor-selling, comic-book adaptations of the illustrated adventures, Marvel was absent from computer games for several years. Finally, Paragon Software began designing computer games, starting with two of Marvel's oldest characters: Spider-Man, who was created in the early '60s, and the World War II comic-book hero, Captain America. Paragon had Marvel editors working with it on every stage of development, and Marvel even contributed an original-page, color-comic to some of Paragon's early products. *Spider-Man* is a rather dull arcade game, while *Dr. Doom's Revenge: Spider-Man and Captain America* is a series of battles separated by comic-book-style story screens that break up the action, but don't make it any more interesting.

A surprise gem among computer adaptations of Marvel comics is *The Punisher* (Paragon). Complete with a full arsenal of hand weapons, a battle van and enough strategy to keep it from becoming completely brainless, *The Punisher* plays like the rare good issue of the comic. Marvel contributed black-and-white comic reprints for the rule book, but mistakenly credited Carl Potts as the *Punisher*'s creator, when it was, in fact, Gerry Conway. Those who like nonstop skeet shooting with an M-16 will prefer LJN's NES game, which features a body count even greater than Bandai's *Rocketeer*.

Unlike Captain America and Spider-Man, the Punisher is a relatively recent creation, as are most members of Marvel's best-selling super-







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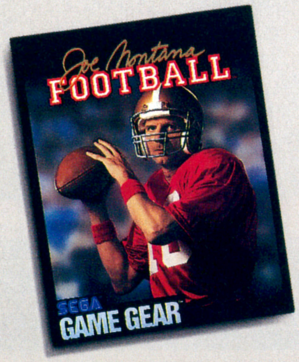
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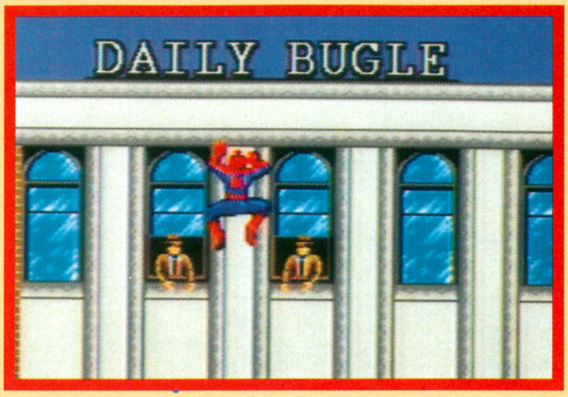
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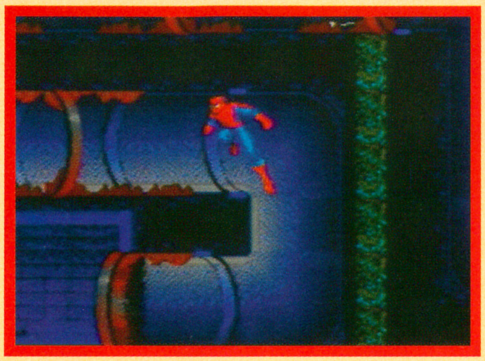
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CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.







Sega's *Spider-Man* for the Genesis proved to be a more entertaining game than Paragon's IBM PC version.

team, the X-Men. Composed solely of mutants who were born with their superpowers, each member has a different ability. Whether designing for computer or the NES, programmers have tried to represent the mix of powers and the advantage of teamwork—with mostly limited success. Sometimes the action focuses on one instantly replaceable character, as in Paragon's *X-Men: Madness in Murderworld* (for the IBM PC), or will allow for a second character controlled by the computer or another human, as in LJN/Acclaim's *X-Men* (for the NES). Conceding that differences between characters may be too subtle to program into simulated combat, *X-Men: The Fall of the Mutants* (Paragon) tries a different and more successful approach. The game, based on actual issues of *The Uncanny X-Men* (issues 225-227), allows players to form their five-member teams from a list of 15 X-Men (including characters not even appearing in those comics) and see how they would do against The Adversary. Using this approach in its upcoming Super NES games, LJN plans to pit the X-Men and Spider-Man against each other's foes, matchups that rarely occur in the comic books.

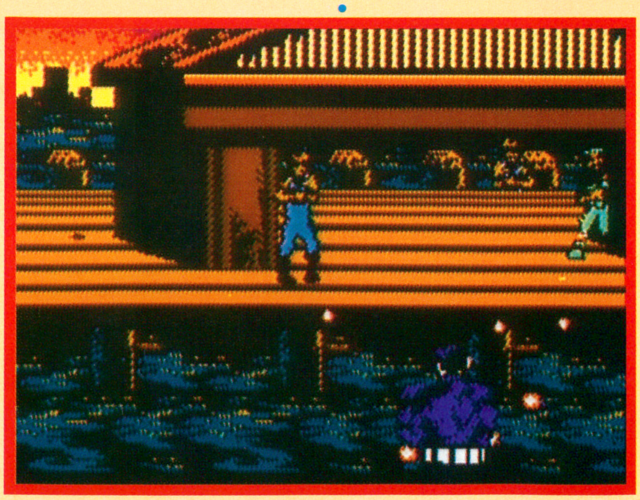
Wolverine is Marvel's most popular mutant, and *Wolverine* (LJN for the NES) demonstrates how omitting some of a character's superpowers can actually enhance the game: In addition to razor-sharp claws, indestructible bones and a rapidly healing body, Wolverine also possesses an acute sense of smell. According to Paul Samulski, LJN's vice-president of creation and product development, programmers considered an on-screen flag to show when foes were downwind, but abandoned it in the interest of playability. In their final jump-and-punch game, that power would have been a useless distraction.

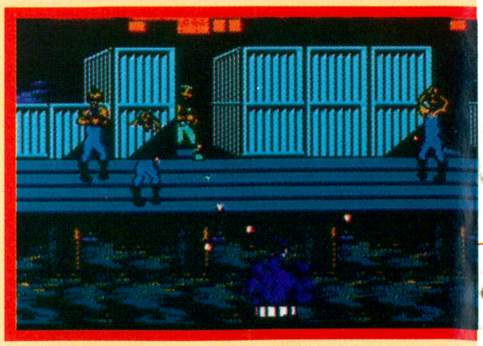
Especially with a team like the X-Men, whose characters are frequently killed and whose villains—particularly their arch-foe Magneto—tend to reform their ways and then return to crime, it is critical for the game design team to have a good working relationship with the comic publisher. Marvel's licensing department communicates daily with LJN to keep it informed of upcoming changes, as well as to veto or delay plans for characters who, worse than dying a violent death, might be having their books canceled due to poor sales. Marvel licensor Irene Ackerman believes that this relationship is one of the major strengths of the adaptations, as demonstrated by *Wolverine*'s inclusion of Jubilee, a recently created pyrotechnic mutant. The licensing department also seems to work closely with the editorial department in the interest of maintaining good relations with potential licensees and advertisers. In a recent issue of the *Fantastic Four* (Marvel's first super-team), characters mentioned both "Super Nintendo" and "Super Genesis."

Similarly, LJN's Samulski is committed to work only with Marvel characters, believing that the Marvel and Nintendo audiences are much the same. So far, sales are proving him correct.

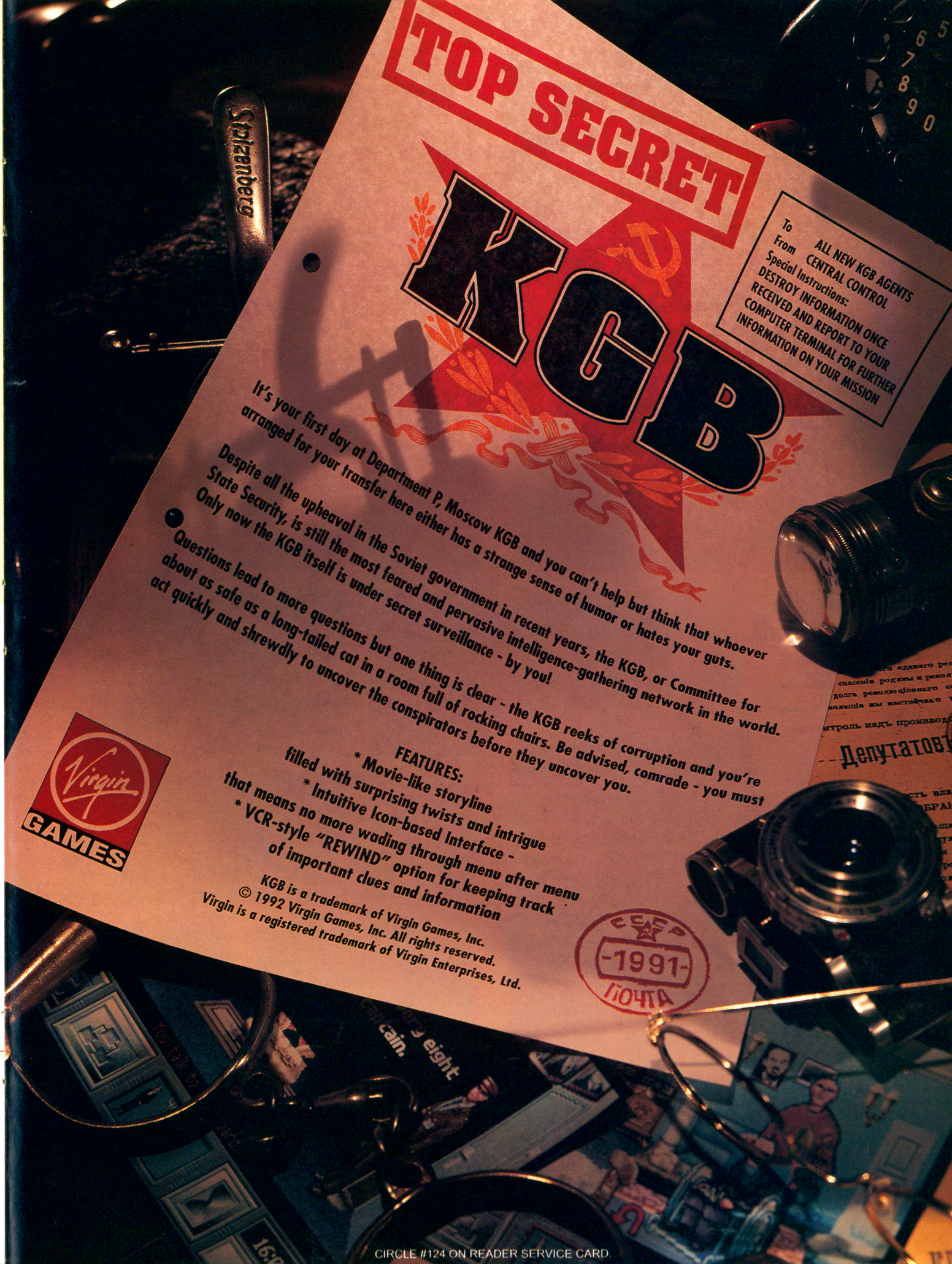
However, Arcadia's adaptation of Marvel's Silver Surfer demonstrates the fact that, with licensors and programmers paying such careful attention to costume design and placement of villains on the storyboard, fundamental flaws in the game's presentation of the character can go un-







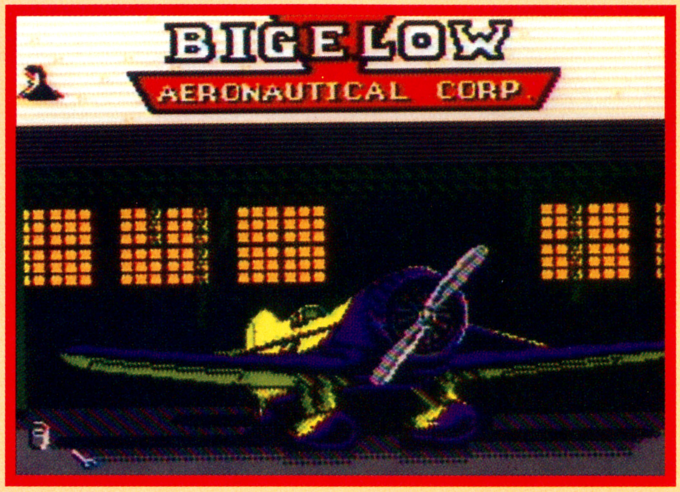
LJN's *The Punisher* for the NES is based on Marvel's comic-book hero.



CIRCLE #124 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

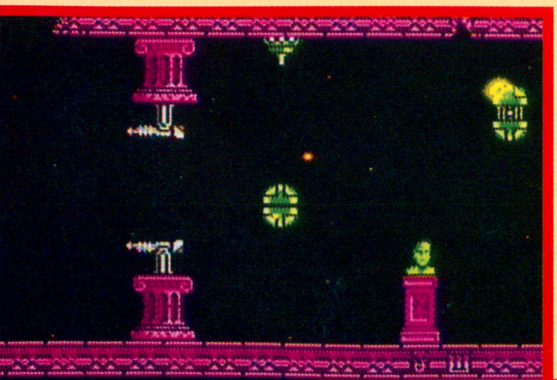


Dave Stevens' *The Rocketeer* has managed to show up on the NES, Super NES and IBM PC.



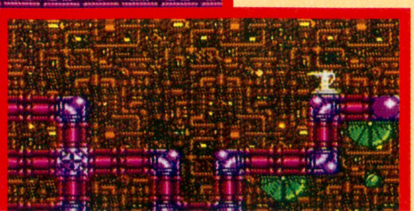
noticed. To co-creator Stan Lee, the Surfer's almost religious cosmic power makes him vulnerable only to the very basic forces of the universe. But, instead of screen-sized visual effects and a silver-skinned juggernaut, Arcadia delivered a little guy who is knocked off his surfboard upon contact with anything. And with multiple lives (as opposed to energy levels) and an extreme level of difficulty before passwords, the animation becomes choppy and no atmosphere can develop. Still, at least it wasn't jump-and-punch.





Arcadia's *Silver Surfer* for the NES paid very careful attention to the comic's minutiae.

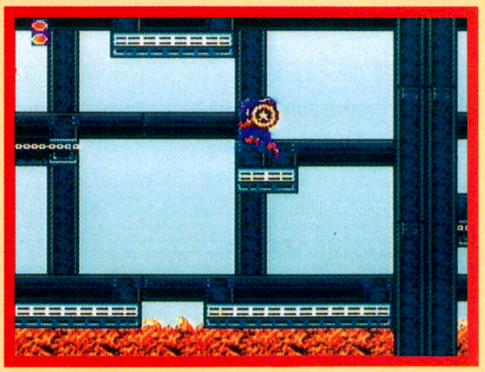




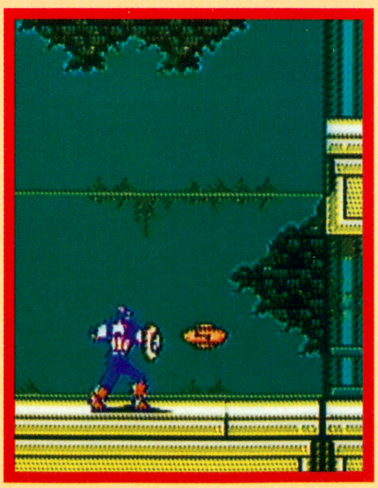
No plans exist for adapting the Fantastic Four, but Marvel's largest super-team is now represented in Data East's recently released *Captain America and the Avengers* (for the NES). Adapted from a similar arcade game of the same name, the translation of Captain America in particular is perhaps the best of any comic-book character so far. Managing to duplicate all of his shield-slinging tricks without making play overly complicated, the main game has Captain America and Hawkeye searching for Iron Man and Vision, who have been captured by the Red Skull and his allies. Instead of a side-by-side, two-player mode, *Captain America* has players pick a hero and a villain for an all-out slugfest in front of the Manhattan skyline.

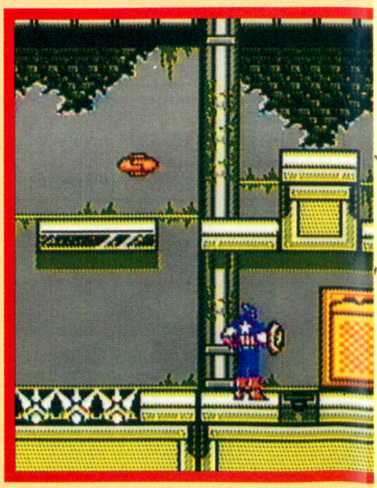
So, with companies becoming more adept at translating comic-book characters to electronic media, and proven heroes like the Punisher, Spider-Man and the Turtles, as well as Japanese comic books like *Fist of North Star* starting to appear on the Super NES and various portable systems, superheroes have established their place in the gaming hierarchy along with swordsmen, sorcerers, spaceships and short Italian plumbers. But, for anyone still not satisfied with preexisting superheroes, Konami will soon release *Champions*, which is based on Steve Peterson's role-playing game. *Champions* promises to be flashy and violent, as well as story driven, a great boon to those who remember that, besides quality artwork, a good comic book has plot and dialogue as well.

Data East's *Captain America and the Avengers* for the NES is perhaps the best adaptation of a comic-book character so far.

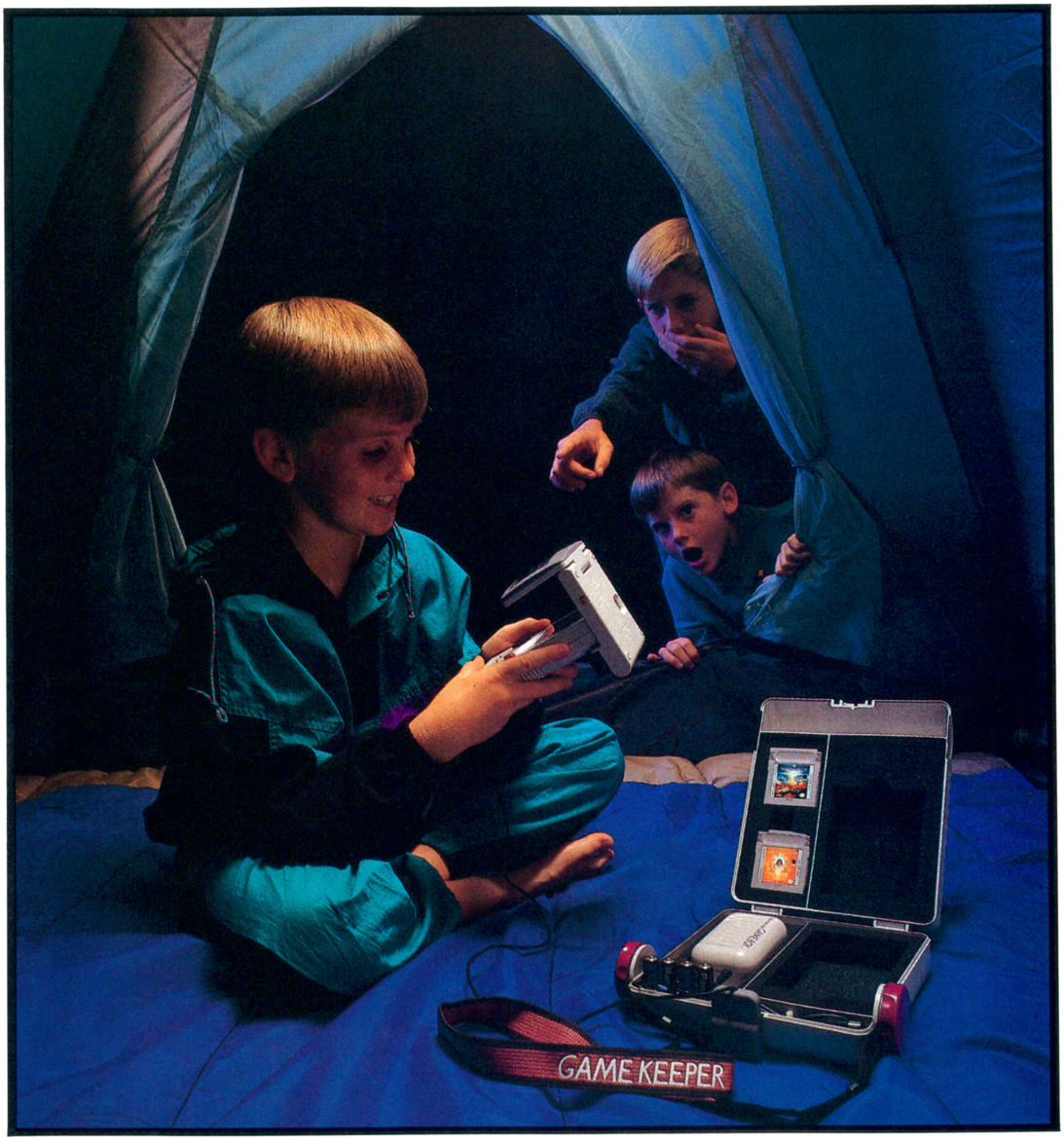




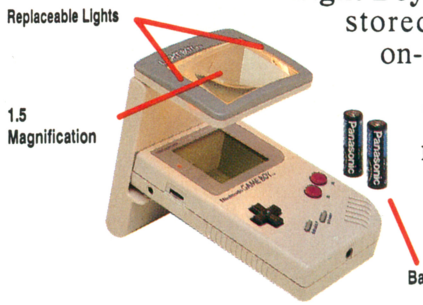




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DESTINATION ARCADIA

THE 1992 A.C.M.E. SHOW

BY DONN NAUERT

This year's American Coin Machine Exposition (ACME), held in San Antonio, Texas, saw the introduction of a few new titles, Capcom's *Street Fighter II Champion Edition* and Williams' *Total Carnage*, as well as the reemergence of several titles that had been shown at earlier shows, Jaleco's *B.O.T.S.S.* and Namco's *Driver's Eyes*. But this year's show in San Antonio, home to the Alamo, certainly didn't disappoint anyone who attended. Here's a rundown of the game companies that had booths at the show and what they had to offer.

American Laser Games

Gallagher's Gallery—Featuring the world famous comedian, this game has you shoot all the food Gallagher hates, like school lunches. If you miss, you can expect to get chewed out by Gallagher.

Space Pirates—In this gun game, you must save a group of space colonists from—yep, you guessed it—space pirates. You'll recognize some of the characters from *Mad Dog McCree* and *Who Shot Johnny Rock?* in this one.



Left: American Laser Games' new coin-op *Space Pirates*.

American Sammy

Viewpoint—This is the first third-party licensed game for the Neo•Geo. It's a good shooter with a *Zaxxon* perspective. Includes such gadgets as having to shoot turn-wheels to open gates.

Atari

Guardians of the Hood—Three of the toughest gangs in the world have taken over your neighborhood. Now it's time for you to take it back. This three-player-simultaneous game will let you choose from four characters and three gang bosses, for seven in all. Features head-to-head and side-scrolling action, with five buttons to do various offensive and defensive moves.





Atari's *Guardians of the Hood* (above) and *Relief Pitcher* (below).

Relief Pitcher—Sports announcer Jack Buck calls the action in this new baseball game. You can select a nine-inning game or begin as the relief pitcher of a close game in the late innings. There are four teams to choose from that the operator can control, to set up regional rivalries. There

are four pitches (rising fastball, sinker, screwball and knuckleball) to choose from, and each player has his own batting and fielding abilities.

Capcom

Knights of the Round—You're on a special quest in this three-player-simultaneous, medieval, hack-'n-slash game.



Capcom's *Knights of the Round*.

Street Fighter II Champion Edition—This new version of *Street Fighter II* features four new characters along with the eight original characters and a "Same Character vs. Same Character" mode. Players now have 50 new two-player matchups for a total of 78, and 46 new fighting strategies.

Data East

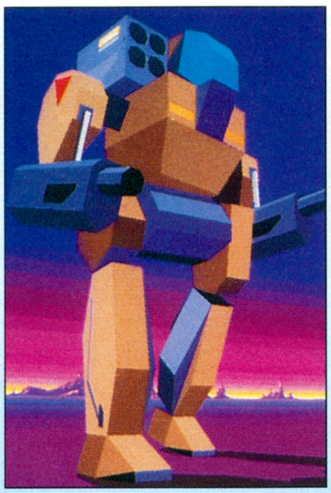
Hook—Based on the movie, this pinball game features a ten-million-point bonus shot and the first 360-degree ramp shot, the Wind Coaster.



Data East's *Hook* is based on the motion picture.

Nitroball—Fight your way through pinball playfieldlike stages, attacking enemies and drop targets with three-way blaster guns, missile launchers and rail blasters.

Rohga—In this futuristic war-battle game, you can construct your giant robot from various heads, torsos and legs (for a total of 64 different types) to battle the villainous Lagnalok and his evil forces.







Left: MicroProse's *B.O.T.S.S.* will be distributed by Jaleco. Right (top and bottom): Jaleco's *Grand Prix Star*.

Wizard Fire—In this one- or two-player game, you can select from four characters to play as you battle enemy armies. Using magic spells, each character can change into other objects, such as a pillar of fire, an angel and a living rock.

Fabtek

Legionnaire—Select from three players in this one- or two-player-simultaneous beat-'em-up.



***Legionnaire*, by Fabtek.**

IREM

Undercover Cops—Dr. Clayborn and his henchmen have taken over New York City. Commissioner Gordon has only one hope: the *Undercover Cops*. Select from three characters in this two- to three-player-simultaneous pound-'em game.

Jaleco

B.O.T.S.S.—*B.O.T.S.S.* (Battle of the Solar System) is a full-color version of the game *Battlezone*, created by MicroProse. This time, as the title indicates, you're battling enemy forces for control of the solar system.

Grand Prix Star—Up to four players, via computer linkup, compete on three different Formula One Grand Prix racing tracks. Eight computer-controlled cars, as well as night driving and weather conditions, add to the challenge.

64th Street: A Detective Story—A rich man's daughter has been kidnapped by a vicious gang, and only the two detectives, Rick and Allen, can save her. Choose between the two characters and battle the gang through six stages to rescue the man's daughter. There are five different moves and various special items you can use in the game.



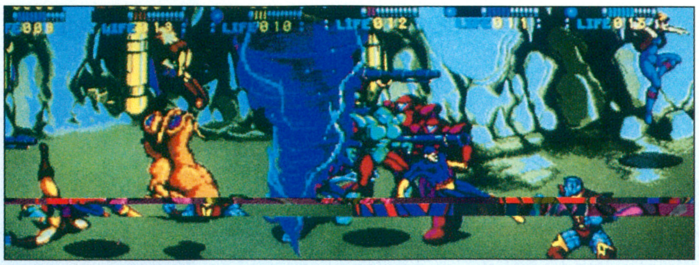
***64th Street: A Detective Story*, by Jaleco.**

Kaneko

In addition to *B. Rap Boys*, Kaneko featured the new game *Blazeon* at its booth.



B. Rap Boys, by Kaneko.



X-Men, by Konami.

Blazeon—An imperial Earth uses a specialized Bio-Cybo army to control the human race. A certain group, seeking freedom, develops two new weapons. The first one is a missile-type weapon that can freeze the enemy, while the second weapon allows you to take possession and control of the enemy.

Konami

G.I. Joe—Konami brings the Marvel Comics superhero to the arcades. This one features the usual cast of heroes, such as G.I. Joe and Snake Eyes.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Turtles in Time—After Krang and Shredder steal the Statue of Liberty, Shredder zaps our four heroes back in time. Choosing one of four characters, you battle from prehistoric times to the year 2100, then back to battle Shredder in the Technodome.

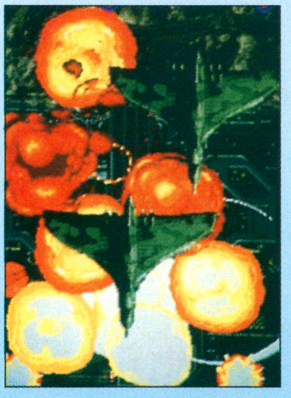


Konami's *TMNT: Turtles in Time*.

X-Men—The evil mutants, lead by Magneto, have captured Professor X. Now the X-Men jump into action to save their leader from the grips of the evil force. Chose from six X-Men—Cyclops, Colossus, Wolverine, Storm, Nightcrawler and Dazzler—in this six-player-simultaneous game.

Mc O'River

Aero Fighters—In this two-player-simultaneous, vertical shooter, you can chose from eight different pilots to control through the seven stages of play.



***Aero Fighters*, by Mc O'River, is a multiplayer shooter.**

Namco

COSMO GANG: The Video—One of the most recognized and played novelty pieces has made its way to the video-game side. One or two players battle the space creatures and try to prevent them from stealing the energy containers. There are two types of stages, attack formation and challenge stages, and over 40 stages in all.

Driver's Eyes—This unique driving game appeared about a year ago, then dropped from public view. This one-player *Final Lap 2*-type racing game has three monitors and a Formula One Simulator Constructor.



Namco's *Driver's Eyes* uses a 3-D visual system.

Suzuka 8 Hours—Namco has taken the Suzuka track, from *Pole Position* and one of the most feared tracks in motorcycle racing circles located in Japan, and added four full *Hang-On*-type motorcycles, which are linked together to create one of the largest arcade pieces ever.



***Suzuka 8 Hours*, by Namco.**

Tank Force—Up to four players can battle it out with enemy tanks as they advance on your headquarters. There are 48 stages and eight special items that will challenge your strategy senses.

Nintendo

Nintendo showed various NES titles for the PlayChoice Ten system that have been seen at other shows and that are currently available in arcades everywhere.

For the Nintendo Super System it had two Ocean products, *The Addams Family* and *RoboCop 3*, as well as *ActRaiser*.

Ocean

Ocean also showed Nintendo Super System titles *The Addams Family* and *RoboCop 3* at its booth.

Premier

Operation: Thunder—Start the "Final Assault" on the domed power plant in this pinball game with an air-combat theme.

Romstar

The King of Dragons—Choose from five mystical characters in this three-player game, as you attempt to defeat *The King of Dragons*.

SNK

SNK had many of its Neo•Geo titles seen at previous conventions, including *Fatal Fury*, *Soccer Brawl*, *Last Resort* and *Mutation Nation*. It also showed American Sammy's *Viewpoint* at the booth.

Sega

Air Rescue—Your mission is to identify and rescue POWs. Tactical maneuvering, offense and speed play a big part in your success. You gain additional fuel for each POW rescued, with the game ending when you run out of fuel.



Exhaust Note—This is a two-player Formula One racing game that features an on-screen course map, a full rear-view mirror and automatic or manual shifting selection.



Arabian Fight—Select one of four characters as you battle the wicked Sheik and his followers, who have abducted Princess Lurana. This is a four-player-simultaneous game.

Holosseum—This new hologram game was previewed. While still incomplete, it will be a *Street Fighter*-style game using holographic figures.

Invaders 2000—This game, also incomplete, is a holographic shooter.

Strata

Strata continued to show titles previously seen, including *Rim Rockin' Basketball*, *Arlington Horse Racing*, *Golden Tee Golf* and *Strata Bowling*.

Taito

Silent Dragon—Select from four characters as you battle the evil Dr. Bio through five stages and try to prevent him from taking over the world.

Tecmo

Saboten Bombers—While his master is away, the brave cactus—that's you—must defend his residence from invading veggies.

Williams

(Includes Bally/Midway and Midway products)

The Addams Family pinball, *Super High Impact* and *Total Carnage* (in its first public appearance) could be found at the Williams booth. A new pinball table, *The Getaway: High Speed II*, was also shown.



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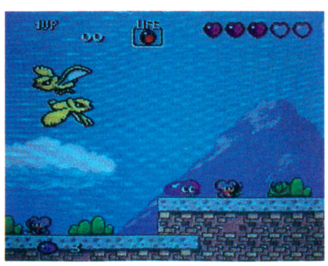
CIRCLE #125 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



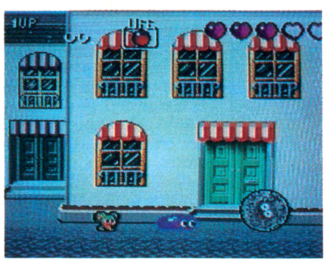
HE'S NO DUMMY!

And if you love 16-bit action, you're not either! Join SmartBall in this wacky new adventure and slip, slide, slither and ooze your way into the craziest worlds you've ever imagined. Through hot tropics, deserts and dangerous urban battlezones, it's you and your buddy SmartBall against a very mean group of nasties.

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Slip-slidin' along



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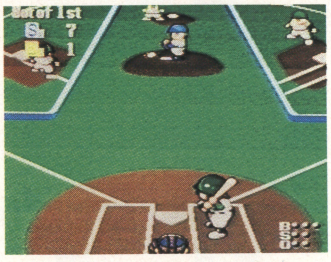
IT'S A HIT!

Bottom of the 10th, two outs, bases loaded, and the league's best hitter is at the plate. Will he take your screw ball downtown? Or will you blow him away with your awesome fast ball? Find out when you play Extra Innings, the amazing new baseball game for Super NES.

Select your starting lineup based on who's hot and who's not. With Extra Innings, you call the shots and control the action: the spin on the curve ball, your batter's slugging power, even your player's dive for a shot up the middle.

When you play Extra Innings, you can put on a hit and run, take a long lead off first, or nail a base runner at the plate on a sacrifice fly. Play like the pros as you fight for a 12-team league pennant. And remember, statistics are updated and available on every player. You even select the stadium — air dome, midsize, or high-walled. Every choice changes the game.

There's never been a baseball game like Extra Innings. Eight different playing options, including two-player mode and all-star team competition, make this the hit of the season. Extra Innings. It's a home run!



Bases loaded, full-count



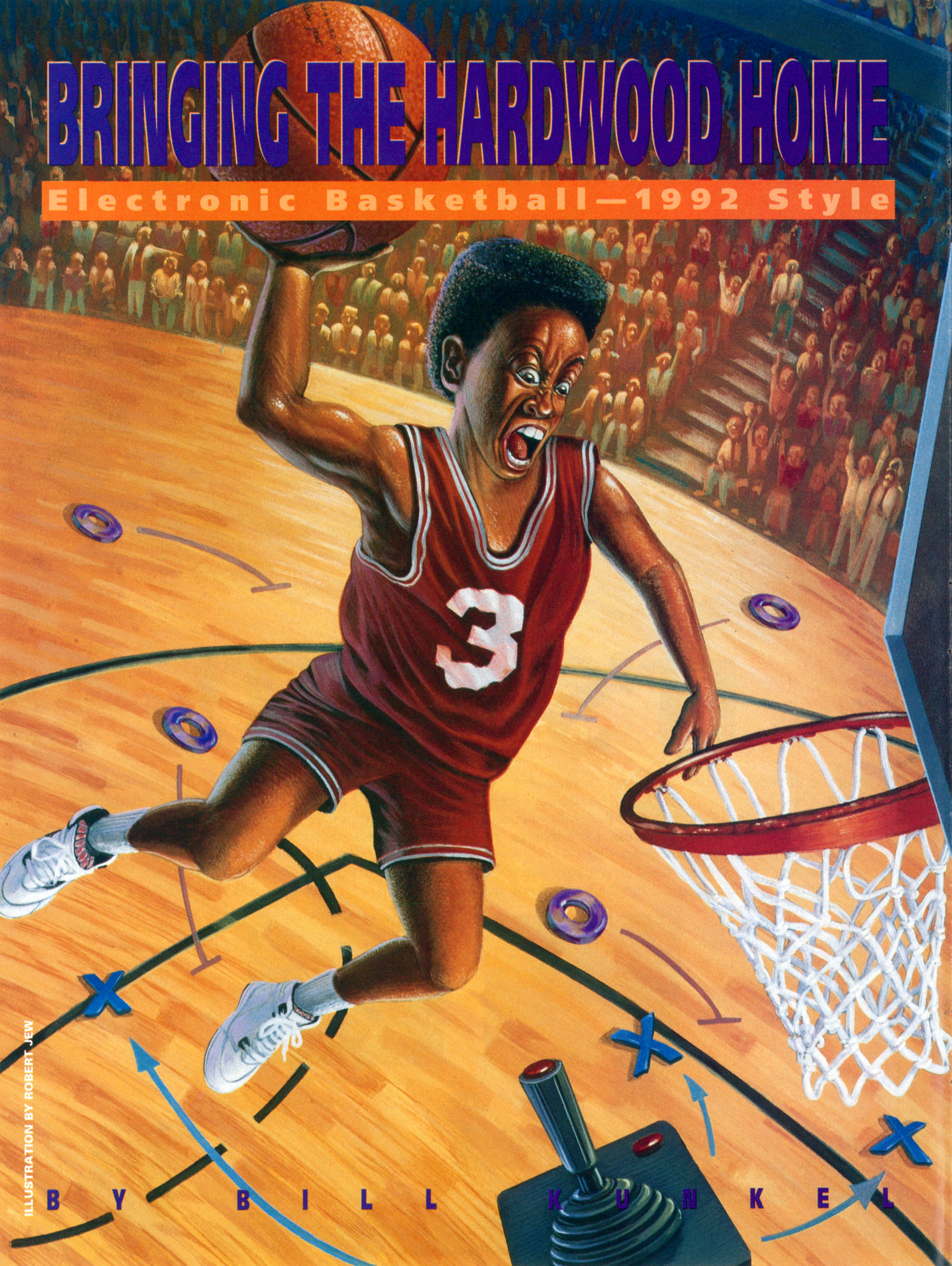
Put in your ace reliever

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BRINGING THE HARDWOOD HOME
Electronic Basketball—1992 Style
3
ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT JEW
BY BILL KUNKEL

The basketball season ran a little longer this year, giving software publishers extra time to produce more entries in this traditionally strong game category. Computer, video game and handheld versions of roundball have been bouncing on and off store shelves like boxes of Mexican jumping beans. And, unlike previous years, the prime objective of most of the developers this time around seems to be originality. New audio and visual special effects have been incorporated into the latest round of basketball simulations, making them some of the most interesting new electronic games around.

Meet the EASN

The busiest basketball publisher in 1992 is certain to be Electronic Arts, with three new titles either already available or soon to be. Two of the games debuting are *Bulls vs. Lakers and the NBA Playoffs* (for the Genesis and Super NES) and *Jordan vs. Bird* (for the Genesis), both of which are actually updates of earlier Electronic Arts hits.

Bulls vs. Lakers and the NBA Playoffs is a new spin on last year's computer hit, *Lakers vs. Celtics*. Designed by Robert Weatherby, it allows Genesis and SNES users to restage the 1991 NBA Finals, and it even throws in all 16 playoff contenders for good measure. More than 30 new features have also been added to this version, including signature plays (from the alley-oop to the famed windmill finger roll), an improved interface and the ability to track stats throughout the game so as to modify strategy when needed. There are player introductions, updates on other playoff games in progress and instant replays of outstanding action. Favorite features from the original game have not been neglected either, with superstars (identifiable by the numbers on their shirts) making their favorite plays, from Charles Barkley's gorilla slam to David Robinson's infamous windmill dunk.

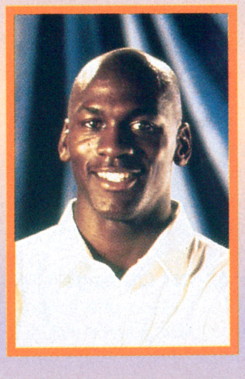
The other entry from Electronic Arts harkens back to the company's earliest days. *Jordan vs. Bird* is basically an update of Eric Hammond's classic *Dr. J and Larry Bird Go One-On-One*, with a couple of new events thrown in. Not only do the two superstars go head-to-head in half-court competition, but there is also a slam-dunk contest and a three-point shootout. Gamers can compete with up to four players in the two new events. The slam-dunk event sees players rated on a one to ten basis by five computerized judges, with all dunks modeled on actual moves created by Jordan and Bird, while the three-point contest introduces an on-the-court perspective to better allow gamers to test their long-range shooting ability.

The third new EA roundball simulation, aimed at the PC market, is the most impressive of the trio. *Michael Jordan Flight* is an incredible re-creation of on-court action utilizing a revolutionary new technology dubbed "Video-Sim" that brings full-motion video animation to a sports game for the first time. This system takes gamers literally down onto the court, where they can leap, spin, shoot and generally dazzle the silicon spectators, thanks to a new system in which Jordan was filmed extensively. His actual movements—reverse lay-ups, slam dunks, etc.—were then translated to the computer screen.

The game can be played three-on-three, one-on-one or in three-point shootout mode. On offense, the computer-controlled players will automatically move into the open, set picks and prepare to snatch up rebounds; on defense they play man-to-man.

There are also several special features that automatically kick in after each game, including an interview with Jordan and replay highlights, rendered from a variety of perspectives and exotic angles. The program even boasts a video-edit lab

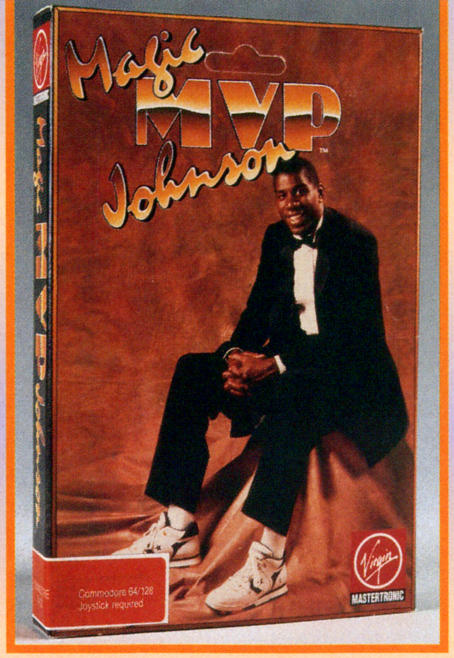






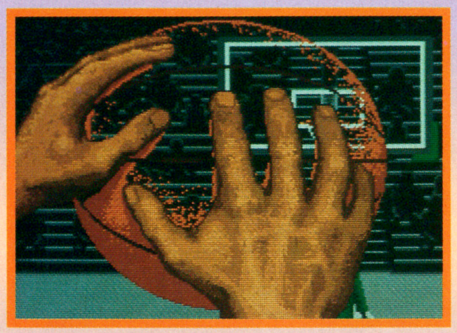


Michael Jordan (top) stars in EA's *Jordan vs. Bird*. EA has published *Bulls vs. Lakers* for both the Super NES (left) and the Genesis (top left and above).



Originally released as *Magic Johnson Basketball*, Virgin has retitled the game *Magic MVP Johnson*.





where users can put together highlight films. In all, *Michael Jordan Flight* is the most exciting new basketball simulation of those announced for release in 1992.

All three of these games are being published under EA's new EASN (Electronic Arts Sports Network) umbrella.

MLSA Joins USA Today

The only other basketball programs announced for computers come from the MicroLeague Sports Association (MLSA), creators of animated stat-replay games for nearly a decade. MLSA has three products on the way for

BASKETBALL GAMEOGRAPHY: 1992

As with all of our gameographies, games that have been included in previous editions (see VG&CE, December 1990) are simply listed. Only new entries are actually described. We also welcome any and all additions.

VIDEO GAMES

Basketball (Atari for the Atari 2600)

Basketball (Magnavox for the Odyssey²)

NBA Basketball (Mattel for the Intellivision)

Great Basketball (Sega for the SMS)

Double Dribble (Konami for the NES)

Hoops (Jaleco for the NES)

All-Pro Basketball (Vic Tokai for the NES)

Magic Johnson's Fast Break (Tradewest for the NES)

Pat Riley Basketball (Sega for the SMS and Genesis)

Jordan vs. Bird: One-On-One (Milton Bradley for the NES)

Ultimate Basketball (American Sammy for the NES)

Arch Rivals (Acclaim for the NES)

Harlem Globetrotters (GameTek for the NES)

Lakers vs. Celtics (Electronic Arts for the SMS and Genesis)

Takin' It to the Hoop (NEC for the TurboGrafx-16)

Bill Laimbeer's Combat Basketball (Hudson Soft for the SNES) Basketball in the 21st century, where there are no personal fouls, and, although people can hear you scream, no one will care.

David Robinson's Supreme Court! (Sega for the Genesis) Hot new angled, top/down basketball game has some of the best sounds and graphics of any electronic basketball simulation.

Jordan vs. Bird (Electronic Arts for the Genesis) New version of the old *Dr. J & Larry Bird Go One-On-One*, with slam-dunk contest and three-point shootout.

Bulls vs. Lakers and the NBA Playoffs (Electronic Arts for the Genesis and SNES) Update of EA's classic *Lakers vs. Celtics* with full 16-team playoff tree.

NBA Super All-Star Challenge (LJN for the SNES) One-on-one action with 27 actual NBA players, including Chris Mullin, Patrick Ewing and Dominique Wilkins.

NCAA Basketball (Hal America for the SNES) Presents the game action with a wild, spinning, 3-D effect that makes use of the Super NES's scaling and rotation capabilities. The game uses actual collegiate teams and stats, and it adheres to NCAA rules.

Magic Johnson's Super Slam Dunk (Virgin for the SNES) Currently under development by Park Place, the developers of several smash sports titles for the Sega Genesis. This game was not available for preview at press time.

COMPUTER GAMES

Basketball (Atari for the Atari 400/800)

One-On-One (Electronic Arts for the Atari 400/800 and C-64)

GBA Basketball: Two-On-Two (Gamestar for various home computers)

Fast Break (Accolade for various home computers)

Final Four (Lance Haffner Games for various home computers)

NBA (Avalon Hill for various home computers)

Pure-Stat College Basketball (Software Simulations for various home computers)

Jordan vs. Bird: One-On-One (Electronic Arts for various home computers)

Magic Johnson Basketball (Virgin for various home computers) This game is no longer available. However, *Omni-Play Basketball* by Ed Ringler (originally published by Brøderbund) was purchased by Virgin and has been retitled *Magic MVP Johnson*.

Lakers vs. Celtics (Electronic Arts for the IBM PC)

TV Sports: Basketball (Cinemaware for various home computers)

Dream Team: 3-On-3 Challenge (Data East for the IBM PC)

Double Dribble (Konami for various home computers)

Michael Jordan Flight (Electronic Arts for the IBM PC) Incredible new video technology is employed in creating the most visually stunning basketball simulation ever seen on a home computer. Even allows users into a video-editing lab, where they can create their own highlight films!

Ultimate Basketball (Context Systems for CDTV) No information was available at press time.

MicroLeague Basketball (USA Today Edition) (MLSA for the Amiga, IBM PC and Macintosh) New, fully animated stat-replay game from the leaders in stat-replays. Works in connection with USA Today's telecommunications system to update all statistics daily.

There are also two auxiliary disks for this program: *Action Series Arcade Basketball*, for joystick jockeys, and a *General Manager/Owner's Disk* that allows users to make trades and set up their own league.

HANDHELDS

David Robinson's Supreme Court! (Sega for the Game Gear) The audiovisual effects are absolutely stunning in this state-of-the-art action game from Acme Software.

Basketbrawl (Atari for the Lynx) A brutal simulation with no referees.

Double Dribble: 5-on-5 (Konami for the Game Boy) New version of an old classic features eight teams with variable skill levels in shooting, stealing, passing and driving to the basketball net.

Jordan vs Bird: One-On-One (Electronic Arts for the Game Boy) Pretty similar to the other EA *One-On-One* games, with a three-point shootout and a slam-dunk contest thrown in.

NBA All-Star Challenge (LJN for the Game Gear) Based on the Super NES game with real NBA players.

NBA All-Star Challenge 2 (LJN for the Game Gear) A sequel to the above game, this baby features 27 NBA stars, a three-point shootout and a slam-dunk competition.

Catch these hits from TENGEN!

OFFICIAL SEGA SEAL OF QUALITY

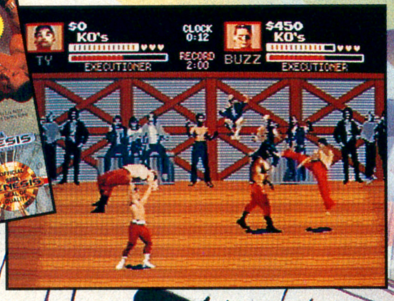
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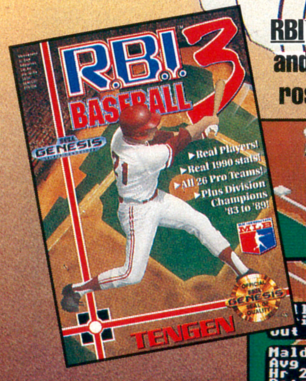
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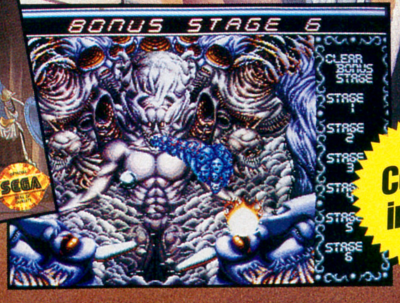


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home computers: *MicroLeague Basketball III (USA Today Edition)*, *Action Series Arcade Basketball* and the *General Manager/Owner's Disk for the USA Today Edition*. *The USA Today Edition* and *GM/O Disk* add-on will be available for the Amiga, C-64/128, Macintosh and IBM PC computers, while *Arcade Basketball* is only scheduled for release on the IBM PC.

MicroLeague Basketball III (USA Today Edition) offers animated VGA graphics; pop-up windows to zoom in on individual players; strategy selection (full-court press, double team and fast break); stadium and crowd noises; multiple, simultaneous game play; modem play; computerized coach override to finish a game automatically; stamina and injury factors; league leaders; complete box scores; and the statistics can be interfaced with USA Today's telecommunications service to keep them up to date.

Fans who wish to run their own league with trading, etc., will want to pick up the *General Manager/Owner's Disk*, which works as an auxiliary product to the *USA Today Edition*.

Gamers who prefer a more action-oriented basketball game to the statistical replay format will be happy to learn that MLSA has finally broken with tradition and produced *Action Series Arcade Basketball* as another auxiliary disk to the *USA Today Edition*. This joystick-driven contest offers many of the features from the original (pop-up windows, USA Today's piped-in stats, etc.), but gives players direct control over selected on-court players.

Actually, another computer basketball game, albeit in CD-ROM format, was announced at the Winter CES: Context Systems' *Ultimate Basketball* for the CDTV. Unfortunately, aside from the developer and system, the only other information available at press time was a suggested retail price of $49.95.

More Video-Game Roundball!

The 16-bit video-game systems from Sega and Nintendo have been crying out for basketball action. Fans who were somewhat disappointed by Sega's *Pat Riley Basketball* on the Genesis, for example, have a real treat in store. Sega went to Bob Jacobs' Acme Software for its latest roundball entry and came up with *David Robinson's Supreme Court!*, a game that looks and sounds so close to the real thing you'll swear you can smell the popcorn. From the squeak of sneakers on a parquet floor to the swish of the ball as it drops through the twine, this program is a delight for the ears as well as the eyes.

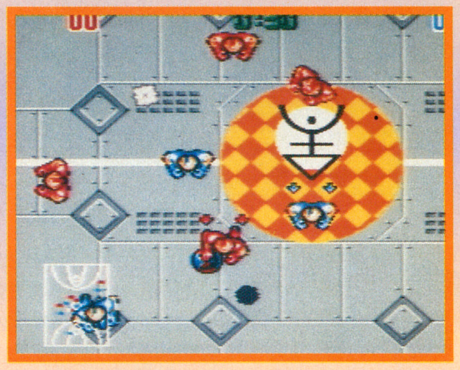
Visually, the action is presented from a slightly tilted, angled, top/down perspective. The point-of-view shifts as the action moves up and down the court, but without the confusion this type of interface usually presents. Moving the team via the Genesis controller is extremely intuitive, and most players will find themselves mastering a variety of shots and strategies.

Four basketball titles have been announced for Nintendo's SNES meanwhile: *NBA Super All-Star Challenge* (LJN), *Bill Laimbeer's Combat Basketball* (Hudson Soft), *NCAA Basketball* (Hal America) and *Magic Johnson's Super Slam Dunk* (Virgin).

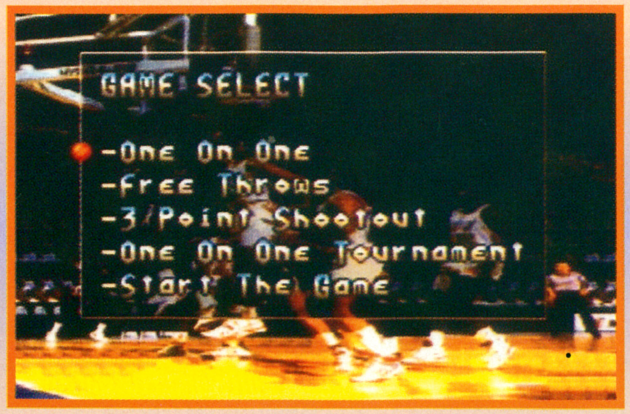
NBA Super All-Star Challenge offers five play modes and a slam-dunk competition featuring 27 NBA All-Stars, including Chris Mullin, Dominique Wilkins and Patrick Ewing, with sound and graphics that take excellent advantage of the SNES's technological extras.

Bill Laimbeer's Combat Basketball is a wild, futuristic basketball variant in which players come to the court in full combat gear. A two-player contest, the Super League Mode, allows up to eight on-court players to compete simultaneously, while a battery backup allows gamers to save league action. And remember, in the 21st century there are *no* personal fouls.

Hal America's *NCAA Basketball*, similar in its play perspective to EA's *Michael Jordan Flight*, presents the









Far top right: Hudson Soft's *Bill Laimbeer's Combat Basketball*. Far center and bottom right: *Magic Johnson's Super Slam Dunk*, by Virgin. Right: LJN's *NBA Super All-Star Challenge*.

game action with a wild, spinning 3-D effect using the SNES's scaling and rotation capabilities. *NCAA* is guaranteed to provide players with hours of unyielding action.

Virgin's entry, *Magic Johnson's Super Slam Dunk*, is promising indeed, as it is being developed by Park Place, the group that brought such classics as *John Madden Football* (Electronic Arts) and *NHL Hockey* (Electronic Arts) to the Genesis. This is Park Place's chance to show that it can create blockbuster sports games on the SNES as well as the Genesis.

B-Ball in Your Hand

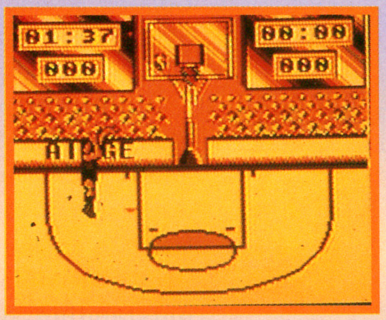
The handheld game market continues to grow, with the success of Sega's Game Gear adding yet another system for software publishers to cater to. In fact, a Game Gear version of *David Robinson's Supreme Court!* is on the way this summer from Sega.

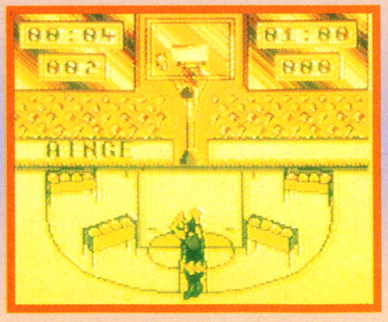
Atari, meanwhile, will be bringing *Basketbrawl*, a basketball simulation played without the benefit of officials or referees, to its Lynx system, and Konami is offering a new Game Boy version of its venerable classic, *Double Dribble: 5-on-5*. In the Konami game, players choose between eight teams with variable skill levels in shooting, stealing, passing and driving to the net.

Electronic Arts will also be producing a Game Boy version of *Jordan vs Bird: One-On-One*, which includes a three-point shootout and a slam-dunk contest.

LJN, meanwhile, has not one but two Game Boy basketball contests. *NBA All-Star Challenge* is based on the SNES game. The presentation includes a half-court perspective and a first-person view for foul shooting. *NBA All-Star Challenge 2*, meanwhile, is the sequel to that game. It features 27 NBA stars, a three-point shootout, a side view for foul shots and a slam-dunk competition.

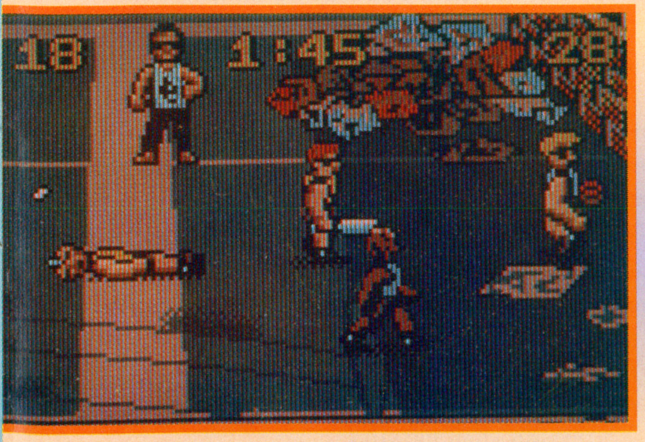
Now that we've covered the new terrain in electronic basketball, from the most grandiose computer simulations to sophisticated new entries in the video game and handheld formats, there's only one thing left for you to do: Lace up those high-tops and head on down to your nearest software store and check 'em out, because electronic basketball has *never* had so much flare and sizzle!

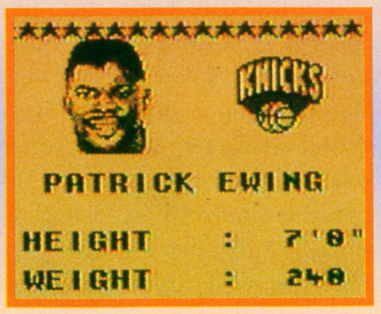




LJN's *NBA All-Star Challenge* (far right top and bottom) and *NBA All-Star Challenge 2* (top and right) for the Game Boy. Atari's *Basketbrawl* for the Lynx (below).



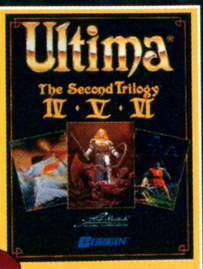




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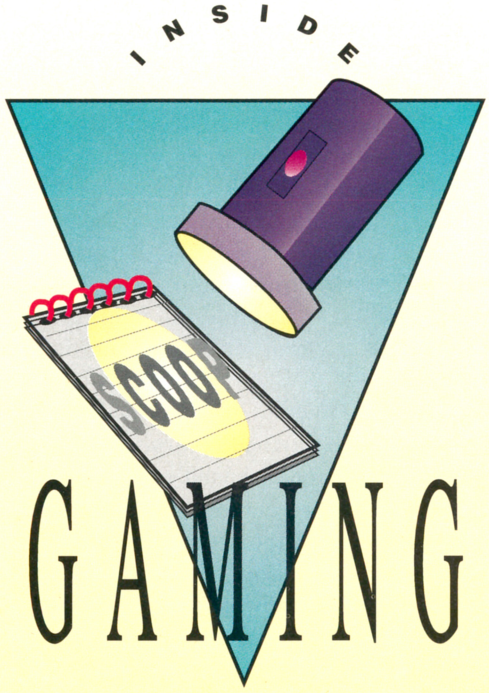
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CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



THE LIMITATIONS OF LICENSING

BY
ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month, Arnie ruminates on the limitations of licenses.

Electronic gaming would be much poorer without the great games based on licensed properties developed in other media. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Konami), *Spot* (Virgin Games), *Lord of the Rings* (Interplay), *Chuck Yeager Combat Flight Simulator* (Electronic Arts) and *Batman* (Sunsoft) are among the recent computer and video games that have used a license as a springboard to an outstanding play experience. As a sports simulation fan, I shudder to think about removing all sports titles that employ real team and player names.

I've always enjoyed working on a licensed project as part of Subway Software, and our company has designed, fine-tuned and evaluated many disks and cartridges of this type. Still, as a game creator and as a player, I think there are some limitations worth pondering in games based on existing characters.

A license makes a game stand out on the shelves. The familiarity of a character taken from books, movies, television or newspaper headlines provides a buying hook for consumers who seldom get the chance to try before they buy.

To millions of players, electronic gaming is a hobby. Industry professionals, including designers, developers and publishers, must regard it as a business or risk ruination. A strong license is a virtual guarantee of at least break-even sales for a video game, so it's understandable that many cartridge manufacturers conceptualize their product line as a series of titles linked to proven pop cultural successes.

That's the case for licenses. Though it features some compelling arguments, it isn't the whole story. Heavy reliance on previously established characters and personalities is not an unalloyed blessing. Does the security blanket of licenses keep computer entertainment software from reaching many potential users? Read on and be the judge....

One major limitation of licenses is that not every character or situation makes a good game. The industry has become more sophisticated about this, so we now hear fewer announcements of titles like *Three Days of the Condor*, an abortive video-game cart of the early 1980s that boiled down to video dentistry.

A prime example of a license that didn't translate into an entertaining game was *America's Cup Racing* (Mindscape). Despite the deep personal commitment of company president Roger Buoy and Tom Snyder's outstanding design/development team, the resulting computer game didn't delight anyone. I believe the reason for its tepid reception is that current computer hardware is not capable of communicating the essence of the experience that attracts people to *real* sailing. Without the tang of the salt air, the roll of the deck and the feel of the onrushing wind, *America's Cup Racing* simply didn't have enough to hold players' interest.

Any licensor has a perfect right to be concerned about what happens to a valuable property assigned to a game company. It would be insane to allow a video- or computer-game publisher to substantially change the license's basic premise. However much the designer might want to give Bart Simpson an older brother or let the Joker kill Batman, it would be financial suicide for a licensor to permit such liberties.

Some character licenses are tied to a specific movie or novel. The licensor almost always wants the game to mirror the story line of the earlier work. This can cause problems, because games differ from most other entertainment media in one crucial way: interactivity.

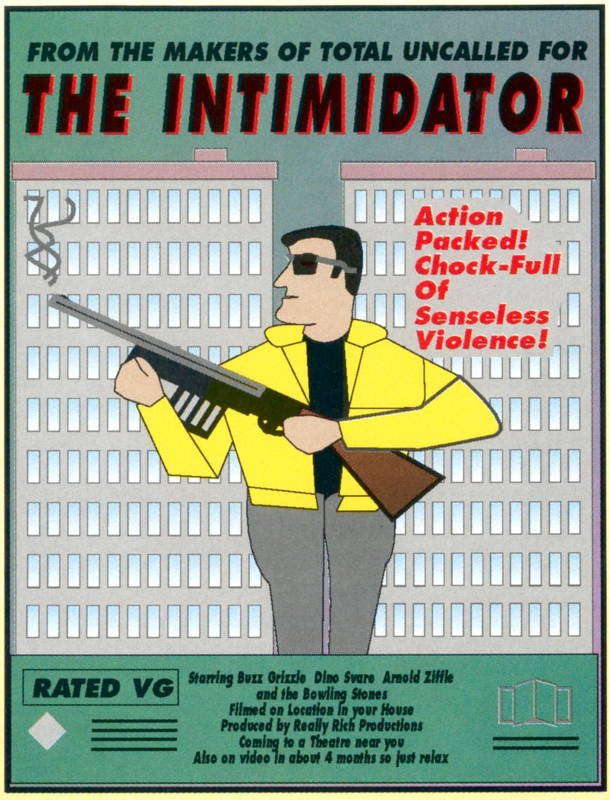
A novelist or screenwriter has dictatorial control over everything that happens. Gamers are seldom so cooperative. Plot twists glossed over with a lot of energy and splashy special effects in a film blockbuster sometimes don't work when examined under the cold light of logic. Cinematic heroes do whatever the writer orders, but game players won't do anything unless the designer gives them a compelling reason.

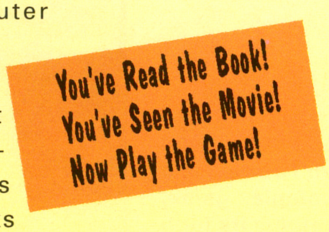
Closely following an existing plot ruins any chance of surprise. Granted, this element disappears during replays anyway, but the player never gets that initial thrill of the unexpected, because nothing can happen in the game that didn't occur in the property that inspired it.

Licensed video and computer games are often more linear than those founded on new premises. Creating optional plot paths is nearly impossible without violating the limitations imposed by licensors of books and films.

There's a line between concern and obsession, and some licensors cross it. A vigilant licensor keeps the game faithful to its inspiration, but insensitivity can derail a project. One game never appeared because the copyright owner wouldn't approve the packaging!

Licensors aren't always conversant with electronic gaming. This sometimes causes them to impose conditions on a game that undercut its entertainment value. When the publisher convinces the license holder to back off, it becomes a funny story. For example, the World Wrestling Federation asked us, as creators of *MicroLeague WWF Wrestling*, if we could fix the matches so the Hulkster always won. The mat moguls bowed to our knowledge of gaming and dropped the request, but can you imagine if they hadn't?







When the licensor won't budge, it can become a giant headache that seldom helps the game's quality. If the licensor, in ignorance of the possibilities opened up by 16-bit technology, insists that a video game look and play like *Super Mario Bros.*, it is likely that the publisher will push the project in that direction. This leads to people working on projects in which they have no faith beyond the legal compulsion to satisfy the terms of their contracts. Such cartridges are sure to strike the more knowledgeable players as derivative rehashes.

Another potential drawback, though admittedly one that's harder to pin down, is that games based on licenses are often not very complex. While the mass market wants games with straightforward goals and streamlined play-mechanics, there's a sizable group of players who want mind-stretching adventures and strategy contests. It's hard for designers to construct the underlying detail that connoisseurs love without doing something that outrages the licensor.

Game producers instinctively avoid such confrontations because they destroy schedules. Products that don't get to the stores on time lose sales and incur extra expenses that seriously dent the bottom line. Product review can be an extremely lengthy procedure under any circumstances. Few producers have the luxury to spend extra time convincing the license holder to allow minor changes. It's hard enough to get the main features approved without inordinate delay.

Is there an alternative to licensing? In many cases, the truthful answer is, "No!" As long as consumers are drawn to household names and images, games that capitalize on them have an intrinsic advantage. Licenses help game companies generate the high revenues needed to defray the developing and marketing costs for top-quality titles.

It might be possible to do something other than just license pop culture icons, though. One route worth exploring is generating licensable properties within the gaming field. *Super Mario Bros.*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Carmen Sandiego* and *Leisure Suit Larry* prove that it can be done. And then the shoe will be on the other foot, as sublicensees are forced to tailor their creative efforts to the whims of software and cartridge publishers.

COMPUTER GAME PREVIEWS

FIRST LOOK

John Madden Football

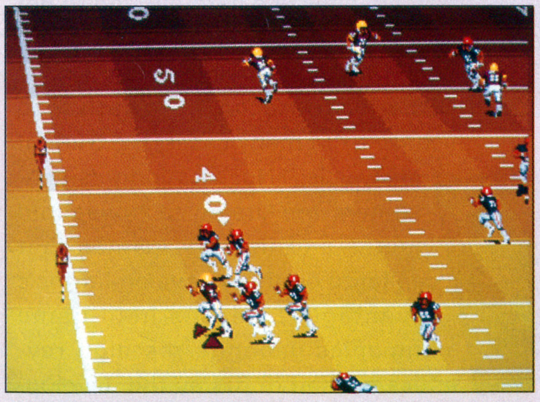
ELECTRONIC ARTS

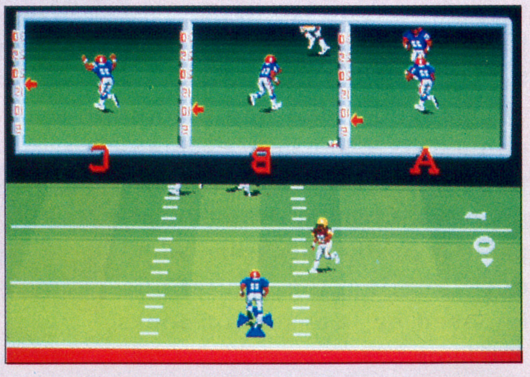
Version Previewed: Amiga

Even knowledgeable pigskin fans found EA's original *John Madden* computer game a bit indigestible. It simulated the strategy interplay of professional football with consummate detail—and minimal playability. This new design has a lot of depth, but streamlined play mechanics and livelier graphics certainly make it more captivating and enjoyable than the original.

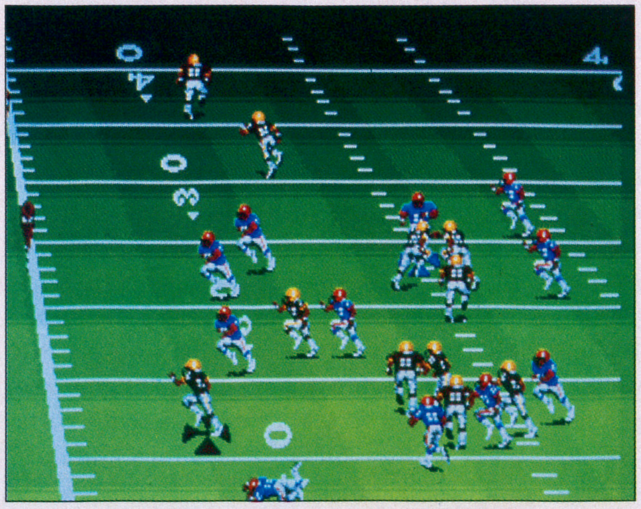
Before the start of this action-strategy simulation for one or two players, the user customizes several aspects of the game, including the type of stadium, playing surface, weather and length of quarters; plus, the player chooses between visiting and home squads.

The end-zone perspective field graphics are a great improvement over the simple visuals contained in EA's early 1980s *John Madden Football*. The new treatment gives computerists a clean and comprehensive view of the gridiron, with much less image overlap than is usually found in traditional, side-perspective pigskin programs.





Electronic Arts' *John Madden Football* is a very complex game, but retains its high degree of playability.





The detailed animation of the individual players supports some sophisticated movement options. The player under the user's direct control, unambiguously identified by the four-way arrow icon under his feet, can dive for the extra yard, spin out of the grasp of tacklers or put on an extra burst of speed and power in response to simple commands entered by the user via either the joystick or the keyboard.

Similar options are provided for players on defense. The coach can try to anticipate the snap or have a defender put an extra-heavy hit on the receiver or ball carrier.

The offense starts by choosing one of six sets of players from the Play Calling Screen that appears when teams go into their pre-play huddles. With the correct players now on the field, the offensive coach selects from among five formations. Finally, the coach picks one of the six specific plays possible from each formation. The defensive coach chooses a set of players, a formation and a play defense in similar fashion.

John Madden Football is a complex game, but it is also highly playable. This completely redesigned sports title is packed with the nuances of real professional football, though the absence of real player names is a disappointment. Computerists will spend much more time playing the game than puzzling over the rules, and that's a marked advance over the original effort. The new incarnation of *John Madden Football* is fully worthy of the man whose smiling face and pungent comments so enliven football telecasts.

—Arnie Katz

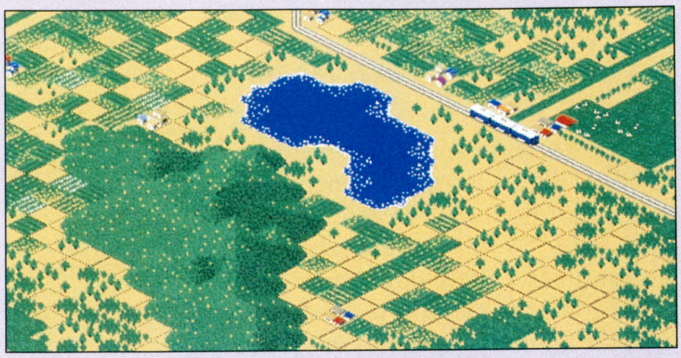
Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

A-Train

MAXIS

Version Previewed: IBM PC

Before even discussing the merits of this railroad-oriented economic simulation, let's give Maxis top grades for honesty. It could've called this *SimRail*, but it didn't, because it is essentially a revision of *A-Train III* by Artdink, which has been





***A-Train*, by Maxis, is a railroad-oriented economic simulation.**

a top seller in Japan since its release in 1990. Jim Siefert led a Stateside group that Americanized the original, including revamped graphics and an extensive manual.

This art-intensive strategy contest challenges the player to design and run a city's transportation network, including both passenger and freight traffic. To do this, the player must learn how to direct urban economic development, run a financial empire and invest in securities. The twin goals are to foster economic health for the community served by the railroad and to build the corporation itself into a financial colossus.

An angled overhead depiction of the city dominates the main display screen, framed by areas that give access to command and status menus. The menus form an integrated structure that lets the player move through this extremely complicated game with surprising speed.

The basic premise may not thrill some American gamers, because it is more applicable to the Japanese experience than it is to ours. We're used to thinking of railroads in conjunction with the development of large geographic areas, not municipalities. Once past this, however, *A-Train* looks very promising for those who enjoy capitalistic simulations.

—A.K.

Maxis Software
2 Theatre Square, Suite 230
Orinda, CA 94563-3346
(510) 254-9700

American Gladiators

GAMETEK

Version Previewed: IBM PC

This seven-event action-sports game is closer to GameTek's forthcoming cartridge for the Super NES than to 1991's NES entry. That's good news, because, although the 8-bit game tries hard, it lacks the entertaining play mechanics, graphic detail and general air of authenticity that characterizes both the Super NES and this PC version.

Players select male or female surrogates and compete against a full roster of American Gladiators in: Assault, Joust, Human Cannonball, Atlasphere, Powerball, the Wall and the dreaded Eliminator.

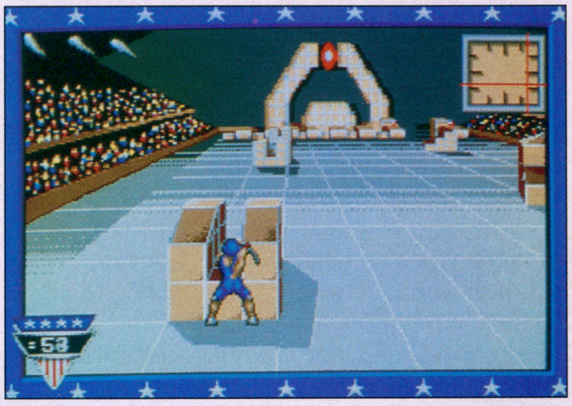
Two computerists can play *American Gladiators* head-to-head, or the computer will provide suitable opposition. There's also a tournament, similar to the one on the TV show, in which up to eight humans may participate. Players can control the on-screen competitors with either joystick or keyboard.

The events employ a variety of display techniques, including separate windows for each competitor in Powerball, the Wall, Atlasphere and the Eliminator. The modified first-person view employed in Assault makes it especially exciting, while the somewhat sparse graphics in the Wall make it the least eye-appealing of the mini-games.

Action contests aren't plentiful on the IBM PC, so *American Gladiators* should receive an especially warm welcome from computer gamers.

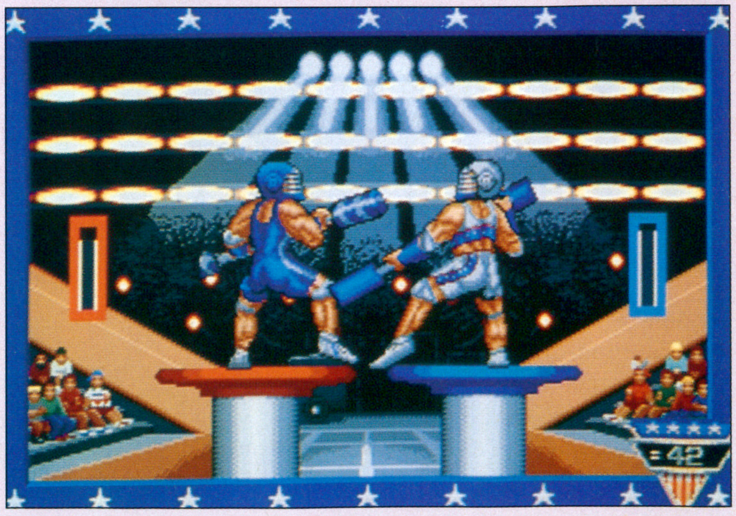
—A.K.

GameTek
2999 NE 191st St., Suite 800
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GameTek's *American Gladiators* for the IBM PC is closer to the Super NES version than its NES counterpart.





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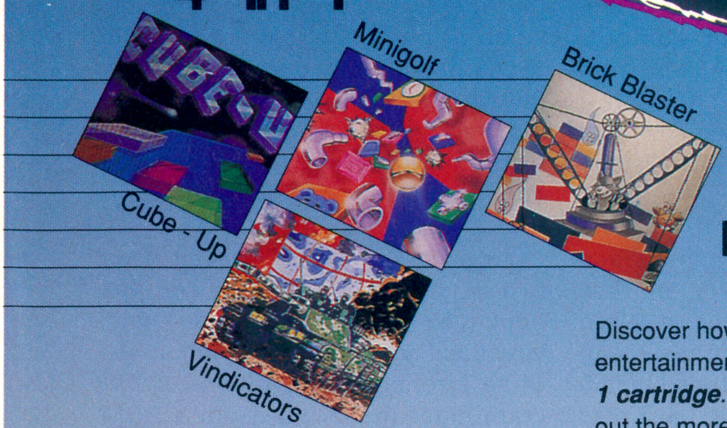
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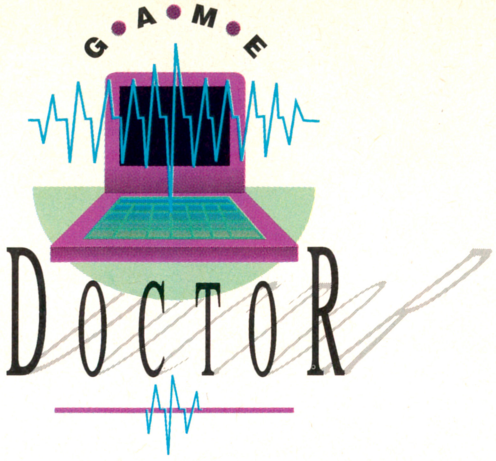
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Q's & A's to Stir A Gamer's Soul!

BY
THE GAME DOCTOR

I know I promised to deliver the entire, Byzantine saga of the *Tetris* odyssey from a demo program in a Russian computer lab to one of the premier games in the history of interactive entertainment. And what a story it is! I've already spoken to several of the key players, but the major problem is that the story is so long and so tangled it reads more like a Robert Ludlum novel than the answer to a reader's simple question. Once I wrap it up, however (believe it or not there are a few things about the deal that *still* completely baffle me), I'll bring you the long-awaited tale of how two different publishers thought they had the U.S. video-game rights and of the subsequent trial to determine actual ownership. This yarn has it all—intrigue, double-dealing and enough legal mumbo jumbo to keep even Walt Disney's legions of lawyers busy for a month of Sundays.

As to when you'll actually get to see it, the Doc is awaiting an editorial decision as to the best way to present the story. But fear not, soon all will come to understand the biggest mystery since the disappearance of Judge Crater. *Unsolved Mysteries* move over! Keep your eyes glued to upcoming issues of VG&CE for the straight dope on how Tengen got *Tetris*ized, Nintendo got fabulously wealthy and the game's actual creator became a "wild and crazy guy."

Okay, now that we've dealt with this month's broken promise, let's answer some Q's!

question

The Genesis is supposedly a 16-bit system, right? Well, I always thought that the CPU in the Genesis was a 32-bit chip. It is the Motorola MC68000 chip, isn't it? The 68000 is the one in the low-end Macintosh computers—the most affordable 32-bit chip available today (I read that in a Motorola ad). But everyone says that the Genesis is a true 16-bit system. What gives?

Also, when people refer to a game's memory (in the case of home video games) in terms of "megs" do they mean mega*bits* or mega*bytes*? When referring to computers, they mean mega*bytes*, right? I think I read that in one of your columns. Well, I just read and ad for a Super NES game, *Final Fantasy II*, and in it was a picture of a cartridge [and the words] "8 megabytes." Mega*bytes*! What's going on? (I've enclosed the ad.)

Finally, about a year ago, I read about the Genesis CD-ROM. Soon, people were asking you about it. Nothing was ever [absolutely certain], though—no one was sure about anything, not even Sega. Well, I happen to get a free *Sega Visions* magazine, and the latest issue had a small article and a picture of the Genesis CD-ROM (though it looked a lot like the Mega Drive version). It gave an approximate release date and a few specs (spring '92, "zoom lens scaling" and "multiaxis rotation," respectively). Do you know about any of this?

Thank you so much for a great column.

—Luis Saenz
Manhattan Beach, CA

answer

Good questions, Luis. As for the 68000 CPU, you must keep in mind that there are several different versions of the 68000 chip. The basic 68000 has been around for quite a few years, but newer models carrying the same numeric tab have come into existence over the past few years, and they are quite different from the original.

As for the *Final Fantasy II* ad (which I had already noticed and was hoping to get a question on—thank you, thank you), that information *has* to be erroneous. Even if you *could* cram eight mega*bytes* into a ROM cartridge, we're talking about, let's see...32 mega*bits*. Right now, the most memory any SNES game packs is 16 megabits, and that program is forced to sell at around $80. An eight megabyte SNES game would have to retail at more than $150 just to pay the cost of that expensive ROM! Which is yet another reason why video-game publishers are so anxious to get those CD-ROM drives hooked up to your game systems: CD is a relatively cheap medium, whereas ROM is a killer.

And since we're already discussing CD drives for video games, Sega has promised that its CD drive for the Genesis (which has been out in Japan for several months now but is being supported by extremely poor software there) will be available in the U.S. by Christmas. On the other hand, Sega of America has continuously vowed that its CD-ROM drive will *not* be released Stateside until it has a solid cache of first-rate product, so I guess we'll have to wait and see.

Scaling, by the way, will be built in as an automatic function on the Sega CD drive. What it does is automatically make objects larger as they move to the foreground and smaller as they move off into the distance. This saves the developers time and space, as they don't have to redraw figures at a variety of sizes and then store the drawings in memory. Multiaxis rotation means the entire game field can be rotated along either the x- or y-axis. Scaling and rotation are built into the Super NES basic system, so Sega obviously felt the need to add them to its CD drive.

question

Will there be a special cable [for the Game Boy], one end of which will go into the Game Boy's video link jack and the other end to a TV set to get a larger picture?

—Hector Ibarra
Escondido, CA

answer

Nintendo is way ahead of you, Hector. A device called the "Wide Boy" has been around for several years now, and it allows one to view the Game Boy images on a larger screen. There are actually three models of the Wide Boy, but it's basically a circuit board that hooks into either the Twin Famicom or the Sharp model of the same system, which is larger and has an onboard disk drive. The enlarged image then appears on a special monitor.

The larger picture produced through the use of the Wide Boy is helpful in a number of ways. The Wide Boy No. 1, for example, runs through a PC and is part of the Game Boy development system, allowing the programmers to see the images more clearly and without eyestrain. The Wide Boy No. 3 comes with an actual cartridge slot; these are very popular at trade shows such as the CES, where ambient light can completely white out a Game Boy screen. It's also a nice treat for the tired eyes of attendees who would probably suffer terrible headaches if they had to examine every Game Boy entry on that system's tiny screen in such a bright environment.

The bad news? Wide Boys are not available to the general public. Sorry about that, dude.

question

I have heard rumors that there will be a chip that you can hook up to the Game Boy that will make it a color portable system. I would like to know if this is true and, if so, will it be a completely new system?

—Joe Hale
San Bernardino, CA

answer

The Game Boy, like the black-and-white Macs, actually possesses the ability to encode colors. However, there is a problem in producing these theoretical colors: The screen has no way to display color, even if it is encoded.

Nintendo denies that it will bring out a color version of the Game Boy, and our No. 1 consultant tells us that such a system will not appear unless Nintendo can retail it for under $100. In other words, don't hold your breath, Joe.

question

I need some answers, please. I used to have a Nintendo Entertainment System, but, when I traded games, they got dirty and never worked. Then I bought a new NES. I haven't traded or borrowed a game in two years and the system [still] works perfectly. My question is: If I buy some used games, will it ruin my NES?

—Gideon Sargeant
Brooklyn, NY

answer

This is an old problem with cartridge-based games and seems to be especially pronounced on the NES. The bottom line is that some people simply do not treat their hardware and software very well. As a result, dirt and other nasty stuff gets inside the cartridge slot and into the contact pins at the bottom of the cartridges. If these pins get dirty, contact cannot be made with the pins inside the system, and the same is true of the contact points inside the cartridge slot.

The easiest way to avoid this kind of problem is to either avoid trading with friends who don't take care of their equipment (and, remember, the same thing can happen with rented games), or to go the extra yard or two and buy one of the game-cleaning products that are available almost anywhere games are sold. We have always recommended the Doc's Hi Tech (no connection whatsoever with yours truly, of course) line of Fix-A-Game products and have yet to receive a negative letter from a user of these products. What you get is a small amount of liquid solution that you dab onto the end of a cotton swab. Then, holding the system or cartridge under a strong light so you'll be able to see any dirt that has collected on the metal points, gently swab away the crud until you can see those contact pins gleaming brightly once again.

You'll be happy, your system will be happy and even your cartridges may give out with a giggle or two.

Well, sojourners after Truth, it appears as if that about wraps things up for this installment of the one and only, ten years strong and still going, *Game Doctor*. We may never solve the riddle of "The Many Faces of *Wonder Boy*" (though I won't give up until I have personally interviewed this mysterious, large-headed figure and learned the truth about his many weird and wonderful escapades), but I've got *Tetris* just about nailed down. So be here next issue for more Q's and A's and Hidey-Ho's and Hidey-Hey's!

Aloha, group.

Remember, send those questions comments and corrections to: ***Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.**

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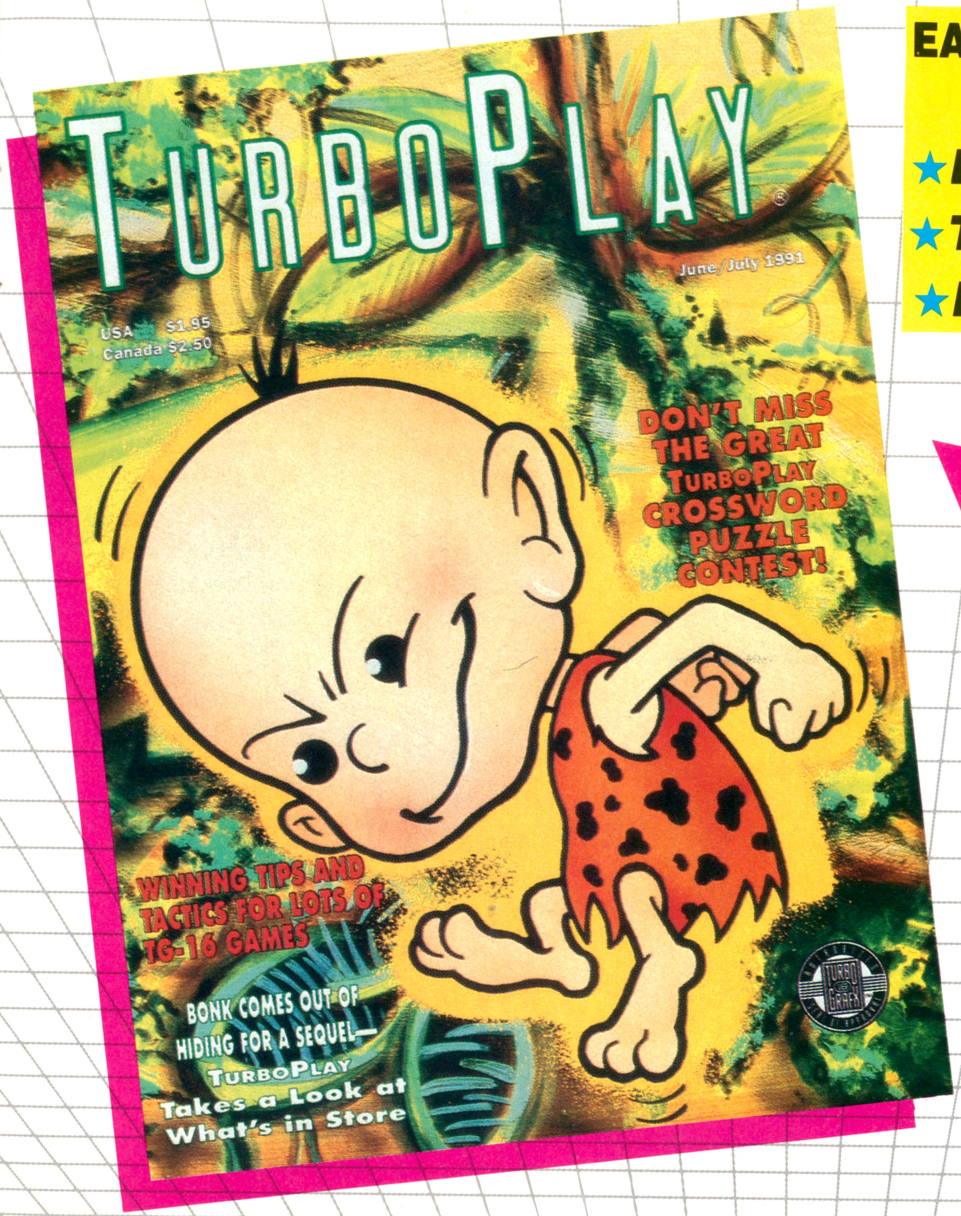
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The Taking of Beverly Hills

CAPSTONE

Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

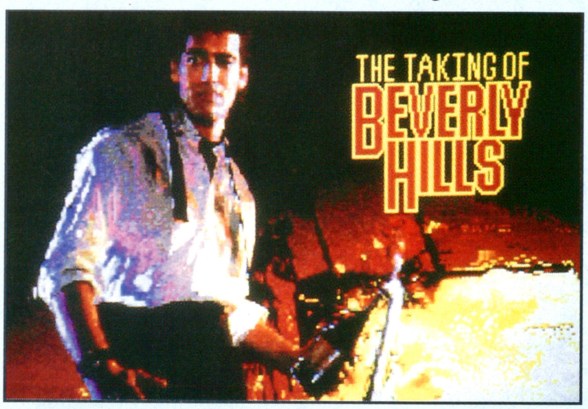
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

The movie *The Taking of Beverly Hills* was a generic action vehicle for former *Wiseguy* television star Ken Wahl that looked like a film destined to waste no time getting to video. The game based on the movie looks and plays as if mediocrity were what the designers and programmers were shooting for, only they came in slightly below the mark.

The Taking of Beverly Hills combines multiple perspectives—first-person, side-scrolling and top/down—with a needlessly confusing interface to create a game that keeps the user off balance throughout most of the learning curve. The game action is displayed in the main window, which occupies approximately the top third of the screen, while data and inventory windows fill the rest of the playfield. The perspectives seem to change at whim, with the player given no reason why he is, for example, suddenly thrust into a first-person point of view, when the same apparent objective (picking up available objects) is also presented in the side-scrolling mode.

The game, like the film, is based on the idea of "urban terrorists" (a breed of criminal that seems to exist only in movies, TV shows and comic books) taking on the richest neighborhood in America. The player is cast as Boomer Hayes, football hero and free-lance, one-man antiterrorism task force. There are also subplots involving the theft of a Botticelli fresco, bad guys disguised as cops (the real cops have been inexplicably kidnapped and must be freed from the firehouse) and the confinement of Boomer's newfound love interest, Laura, by the ruthless Robert Masterson.









Capstone's *The Taking of Beverly Hills* combines multiple perspectives—first-person, side-scrolling and top/down.

Unfortunately, attempting to cram all of these subplots into a game based on a movie few have seen (or are likely to) makes for some severely bewildering gaming. Despite the seeming simplicity of the interface, nothing manages to play the way it's described in the documentation, which only compounds the confusion. For example, the player is free at any time to leave control of Boomer and "become" Laura, yet contact between Laura and Boomer is named as one of the game's first priorities.

Everything in this game is difficult, especially the manipulation of inventory objects, as if the interface were fighting with the player rather than presenting the simple and intuitive game mechanics that are clearly called for in this type of computer entertainment.

The graphics are mediocre, and even with a Sound Blaster turned all the way up the theme music is barely audible.

—Bill Kunkel

Capstone
c/o IntraCorp Inc.
14160 SW 139 Court
Miami, FL 33186
(800) 468-7226

Populous II

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

As Zeus' son, the player must conquer the worlds of 32 other gods and defeat his super-dad in a world-shaking showdown to gain his inheritance in this sequel to a former Game of the Year winner. Bullfrog Productions has produced a better-looking, smoother-playing variation of its original success.

The main display of this icon-driven action-strategy contest shows a close-up view of a portion of the planet under contention in the center, with the world map above it on the left and the colosseum in the upper-right corner. One edge of the close-up has a strip of symbols that trigger various forms of "divine intervention," while another side displays basic commands that let the deity control the population loyal to him.





Electronic Arts' *Populous II* is a complex brain-stretcher, but the design/development team has made every possible effort to keep the rules from overwhelming the players.

The Deity Generator employs point-and-click commands to fully customize a god. The user can even generate facial features, choosing a benign or malevolent appearance, depending on his creation's personality.

Populous II is most similar to the 1989 hit in play mechanic. The god must raise and lower land to create plains for settlement, encourage populations to explore more territory and extend the society. A god gets lightning bolts to symbolize experience gained in world-building, and these are redeemable for additional powers.

The solitaire contest plays in two modes: conquest and custom. The former is the main focus of this product, a multi-part struggle to overthrow rival gods and gain a throne on Mount Olympus. Custom lets the computerist lay siege to a unique world, though divine intervention is limited to those methods that the player has already acquired in the ongoing conquest campaign.

Populous II is a complex brain-stretcher, but the design/development team has made every possible effort to keep the rules from overwhelming the players. Intelligent documentation helps get users playing quickly, though it takes several sessions to understand the nuances of this subtle and sophisticated strategy title.

—Arnie Katz

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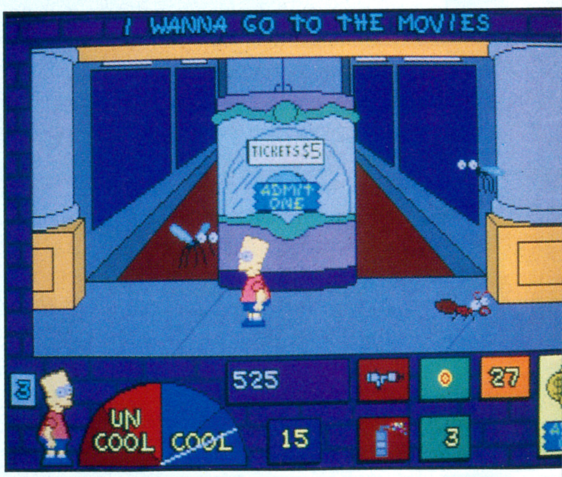
The Simpsons: Bart's House of Weirdness

KONAMI

Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Hey dudes and dudettes, wanna be really cool? That's what it takes to survive *Bart's House of Weirdness*, where the cool meter is the law of the land.



***The Simpsons: Bart's House of Weirdness*, by Konami, remains completely faithful to the original license upon which it was based.**



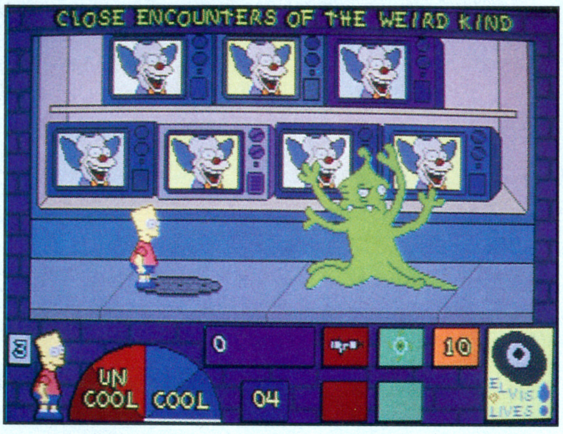
Bart, banished to the inner sanctum (his room), uses his imagination and innovation to escape his predicament, with the player's help of course. Bart's quests are for fancy running shoes, cool-looking shades, a groovy cap and objects that help him stay



Bart's House of Weirdness contains graphics that are completely faithful to the original television show.

alive to battle with Sideshow Bob in the Radical Zone.

Bart must defeat six worlds to get to the final quest. Between these sequences, he returns to his room to rest up and save the game (a good addition that is often sorely missed in the arcade-game genre). Bart's initial foray is into the attic, where he deals with killer bees and other insects. Other adventures include a journey through the basement (battling dust balls and the like), a search for Maggie's ball and a trip to the movies. Within the confines of Bart's closet, he makes two further flights of fancy: saving the Earth from space mutants and starring in an episode of *Itchy and Scratchy*, his favorite television show.



Bart begins with only a burp gun but acquires other weapons throughout the game (water balloons, cans of spray paint, a slingshot and a dart gun), two of which may be active at any one time. Unused items are brought into the next level without penalty.

The graphics are completely faithful to the original television show, stressing accurate representation rather than ground breaking innovation. The upper two thirds of the playing screen depicts the horizontally scrolling world of this run-jump shoot-'em-up. The lower third of the screen contains the status bar: the cool meter (a measure of how much strength Bart has remaining in his current life), how many lives remain, weapon and ammo status and the objective for the current game level.

The game assigns two separate joystick configurations to a single stick (shooting and jumping modes). The player has to determine the best setting for each situation and switch between them using the F9 key. This is annoying and should have been eliminated in the design process by streamlining the stick commands or the required motions of the on-screen character.

The audio portion of the game is somewhat disappointing. Some of the digitized sounds are tinny, even with a Sound Blaster Pro card in use. On the other hand, the VCR-like interface is a very positive addition. It allows players to save play sequences and even incorporate them into the opening credits of the game.

Bart's House of Weirdness is an arcade game offering of average difficulty that remains completely faithful to the original license it was based upon. Unfortunately, it needed just a little more effort, and an improved control interface, to elevate the fun potential of the game.

—Ed Dille

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Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus

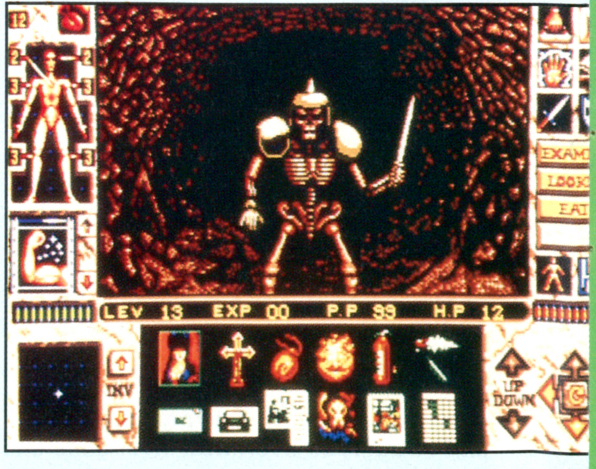
ACCOLADE

Versions: Amiga ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Styled as a rollicking romp in the netherworld, *Elvira II* should satisfy the "gruesomeness quota" of even the most jaundiced horror/role-playing fans. Our heroine is once again in need of rescue, this time from a three-headed hound of hell named Cerberus, who has taken free reign in Elvira's studio, Black Widow Productions.

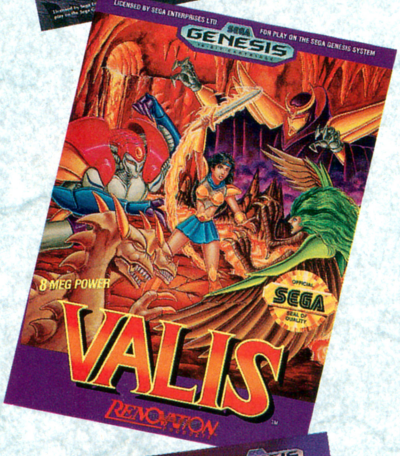
The player stumbles into this plight as the unwitting date of the femme fatale and must initially pick a persona from the four choices: stuntman, computer programmer, knife thrower and private eye. A level and experience point system develops charac-



***Elvira II* should satisfy the "gruesomeness quota" of even the most jaundiced horror/role-playing fans.**

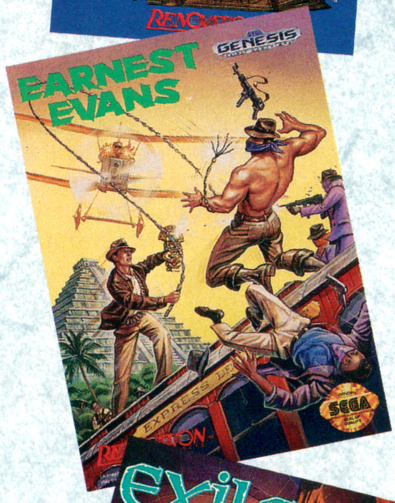
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CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.





Accolade's *Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus* offers some dazzlingly gruesome graphics and a moody musical score.

ters, but one doesn't become invulnerable to most opponents after a period of time, as often happens in other games of this type. Hit points are directly attributable to the various body parts, making the damage system for combat much more realistic. Losing full use of an arm, for example, can have devastating effects. This is a welcome innovation that should be considered for future role-playing designs.

The interface employs a first-person perspective and icon-driven mechanics. The mouse pointer becomes a sword during encounters, and the gamer simply clicks on the portion of the monster to be attacked (each has different weaknesses). A window allows players to "sense" critters creeping up behind them. Object manipulation and inventory management also use the point-and-click method.

Some of the object placements are less than perfect. Use the save game feature often to quickly restore the game if something unexpected occurs during object manipulation. Several of these objects have more than one purpose and shouldn't be expended prematurely.

Players must decide between three different soundstages to begin their quest: the Spider Caves, an old Victorian house and a graveyard. The house holds critical clues to later portions of the game (e.g., how to defeat Cerberus once Elvira is rescued), so players should begin there. Be sure to read everything in the library and get in good with Dr. Frankenstein as well. Once this portion (the most cerebral of the three areas) is completed, a lot of the rest of the game is hack and slash, with an occasional puzzle thrown in for good measure.

Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus offers some dazzlingly gruesome graphics and a moody musical score that, unfortunately, cannot be toggled off. Off-disk, codewheel based copy protection is used. The game is appropriate table fare for advanced role-playing gamers, more because of its nonlinear nature than the difficulty of any particular puzzle. Some players may be frustrated by *Elvira II*, but few will be disappointed.

—E.D.

Accolade
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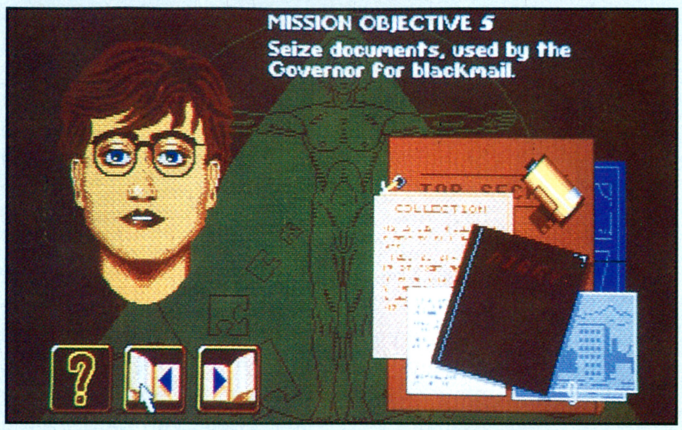
Version: Amiga ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

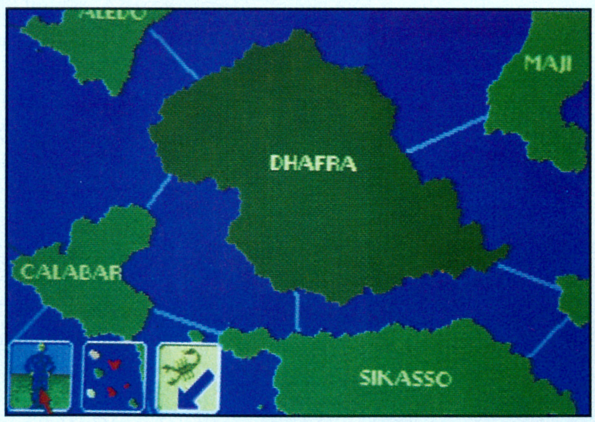
Simulations sometimes concentrate more on the representation of a particular plane, boat, car, etc., than the game play that surrounds that vehicle. As a result, a program may have the best computer version of a particular helicopter, but a poor interface that obscures its merits. *Flames of Freedom* goes in the completely opposite direction. It combines a 3-D world and many ways to travel within that world with an enormous game that can be played in whole or in pieces in the form of missions.







Flames of Freedom is the sequel to *Midwinter*, another strategy game from MicroPlay. In *Flames*, Midwinter Island has sunk beneath the sea, and the Saharan Empire plans to take over all 42 of the islands off the western coast of Africa. The player takes the part of a freedom fighter from Agora Island who must convince the other islands' inhabitants to defend themselves against the Saharans. In the game's finale, the allied islands come to the player's aid and take some of the fire out of the Saharan fleet as it makes its way to Agora.



***Flames of Freedom* combines a 3-D world and many ways to travel within that world with an enormous game that can be played in whole or in pieces in the form of missions.**

Liberation of each island is a separate mission, and players may choose one mission or try the entire strategy game. Breaking the game into distinct chunks of varying difficulty gives players a better chance to accustom themselves to the interface and logistics of the game. They'll need this experience in order to handle the more difficult missions.

Most of the action takes place in a 3-D environment that is quite realistic, despite the polygon graphics. Players can use any available vehicle, amphibious or land-based, in the sky or in the water. The primary goal of each mission varies. Sometimes an assassination must take place; other times, a particular building or group of vehicles must be destroyed. The player moves within the game's environment to meet contacts, personally fire upon key targets and gather information and objects necessary for success. Although quick travel is possible, normal travel within a mission reveals the scope of the game.

Because of the large number of islands in *Flames*, many players will never make it to the end battle against the Saharan force. Choice of next mission/island puts more control of the strategy in the player's hands than a lot of simulation/strategy games that force a player to follow a particular course of action.

As a game, *Flames* is a lot of fun, although it is quite easy to forget about the mission and get lost in the exploration of the 3-D landscape. This overall flexibility does a lot to complete the illusion of reality.

The graphics are very nice. Travel on the island takes place in 3-D mode, largely using polygon-based graphics. Animation is smooth, although a bit too slow during some battles. Part of the speed problem may be related to the explosions, which generate a lot of flying circles for a debris effect. Use of various vehicles in the game is effortless and the controls for each one are only a press of the **HELP** key away. Lots of well-drawn bit-mapped graphics make up the rest of the game, from the detailed topographical maps of the islands to the contact screens and agent design screen. Unfortunately, *Flames* loses out in the sound arena. Although the sound effects are nice, they are sparse, and the same title screen music plays throughout the game. More attention to this area would have made *Flames* perfect.

Flames is an enormous game. As such, it may keep players tied up for weeks. Simple missions can take anywhere from a half-hour to a couple of hours. It is important for players to spend some time in training mode to learn the best way for their agent to deal with guards (to escape jail), use the vehicles and plan strategy.

Because of its depth and variety, *Flames of Freedom* is great fun for a number of different players: simulation fans, strategy buffs and even adventure game explorers. Success on one island offers a feeling of accomplishment that incites gamers to defeat the Saharan Empire and release all of the dominated people.

—Russ Ceccola

MicroProse
180 Lake Front Drive
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Bush Buck Global Treasure Hunter

PC GLOBE INC.

Version: IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

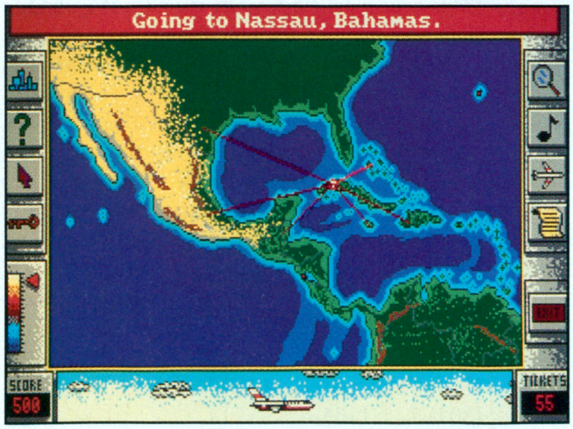
Since Brøderbund's *Carmen Sandiego* game series has come out, other software companies have tried to design another hit that incorporates learning and fun into the same game. *Bush Buck Global Treasure Hunter* is just the type of game to capture the attention of fans of Carmen and other family entertainment/educational titles.

Bush Buck is a race around the world in which one or two players try to beat their opponent to the treasures randomly chosen from a list of 400 priceless items. Players start off at a random city on the map of the world, the home base to which they must return with the treasures. An item is found by simply visiting the city that currently holds it.

Clues to the locations of treasures are given in cities with squares next to their names. Cities with diamonds are for information and travel only. Players have a limited number of plane tickets that are necessary to travel from location to location in the game.

Not only do players have to make informed guesses based on the clues, but they also have to use strategy to take them to as many different areas of the world as possible with the plane tickets allotted. Those who return a treasure to home base receive more tickets, as well as points. The object of the game is to find and return as many of the 15 items as possible to home base before running out of plane tickets. Certain plane routes go through storms. These storms, and other bad weather, damage the treasures and thus reduce the number of points awarded for returning the items.





***Bush Buck Global Treasure Hunter*'s interface is rather simple and easy to understand and control.**

Bush Buck's interface is rather simple and easy to understand and control. A portion of the map of the world fills most of the screen in one of two zoom modes. Players click on cities and gather information or clues. Clues are more important, but both help make it easy to learn about the world in which we live. Icons along the borders of the view screen allow access to the very helpful tracker that lists all the clues the player finds in any city, as well as game control functions. Game play couldn't be more straightforward.

There are three difficulty levels so that players of different abilities have a fighting chance to win the game. The difficulty levels vary the amount of plane tickets that players have at the start of the game, the points awarded for discovering clues and returning items, and the way players are told how close they are to a treasure. In the beginner's level, a thermometer indicates how "hot" or "cold" the player is in relation to the item. In the intermediate level, an eye flashes when the player is on a location with the item. In the hard level, players have to select the eye to see if a treasure is in a city. These variations in the levels make the game more interesting and accessible to a wider audience.

Sound effects and music are, regrettably, pretty poor; there aren't a lot of either in the game. Graphics also are far from state of the art for current games. The animation sequences of the plane lifting off and landing are nice, but they lack excitement. Although the game supports VGA mode, the map and animation look like they are stuck in EGA. On the other hand, it is easy to match up the on-screen areas to the colorful and large map that comes with the game.

Because the clues and information in *Bush Buck* are based on cities rather than countries, most of the game continues to be valid despite all the changes to the former Soviet Union during the past year.

Bush Buck's excitement is based on its strategic element; it requires some forethought and planning to beat an opponent. There is always a shortest plane route to a particular location, but storms and other interference frequently make plans change.

A good combination of strategy, fun and education, *Bush Buck* gives gamers everywhere another reason to learn about the world and its cultures.

—R.C.

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Bloodwych

KONAMI

Version: IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

The Bloodwych have come back—quietly, of course. Zendick, the powerful mage who was once brother to this band of psychic wizards, still rules with his minions in Trazere. Eons ago he betrayed them and banished the Bloodwych to the Astral Plane. Now, two have returned to inhabit the bodies of two of Trazere's 16 remaining champions. They must destroy Zendick and return his ally, the Lord of Entropy, to the realm of chaos before they annihilate the world.

Actually, it could be one or two champions, depending on how many players there are. The first step is to choose which champion the player wishes to be. There are four each of four groups, each group represented by a suit: Spades for Fighters, Clubs for Mages, Diamonds for Archers and Assassins, and Hearts for Adventurers. The name of each champion humorously reflects his or her character. For example, Astroth Slaemwort is a reptilian fighter with fangs, while Megrim of Moonwych is a dark-haired, druidlike woman with a tiara.

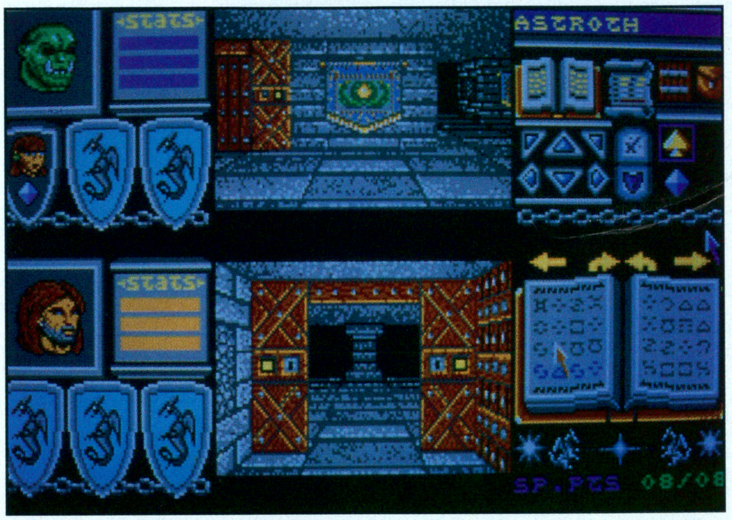
Once the champion is picked, play begins, and the gamer gets a three-dimensional champion's-eye-view of a labyrinthine dungeon. The graphics are good, though not minutely detailed. The small objects the player must find are sometimes hard to decipher or even see.

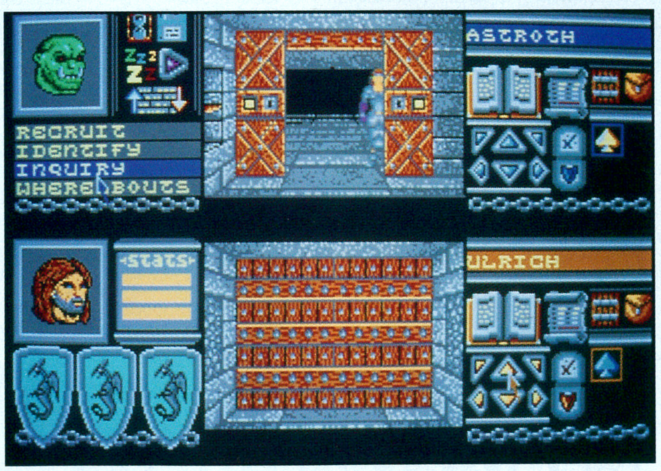
Accompanied by heroic but somewhat repetitive music, the player uses either keyboard or mouse, but *Bloodwych* is played best using a mouse to click on the icons.



Imaginative and occasionally witty, Konami's *Bloodwych* sweeps the player into a world full of characters that could have stepped from the pages of a Fritz Leiber novel.

As the on-screen hero finds the way to each of the four towers in the city, food, keys, weapons and other items can be added to the inventory. Other champions, with their own inventories, are met during the game, and the player can try to recruit them into joining the quest. The gamer will also meet assorted nasty types who try to kill him or her. These encounters provide the most enjoyable aspects of the game. The banter, threats, bribery and boasts that fly between the characters can be very funny (although the phrase "awesome friend" could have been retired). The communication between them does get quite sophisticated as the game continues.





The champion and his band are able to cast spells as well as fight, and there's a wide range of weapons available. Although all weapons can be used by all champions, some characters are more proficient in their use than others.

Eventually, the group gets to the towers. In each, they find a crystal of storing. When the champs take these to the fifth tower, home of the evil Zendick and the Lord of Entropy, the crystals are used to bring about the demise of the bad guys.

Bloodwych is a good introduction to role-playing games. Imaginative and occasionally even witty, it sweeps the player into a world full of characters that could have stepped from the pages of a Fritz Leiber novel. It's easy to play, but complex and involved, and promises the player hours of fantastic gaming escape.

—Sara Slaymaker

Konami Inc.
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4510
(708) 215-5111

Super Tetris

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

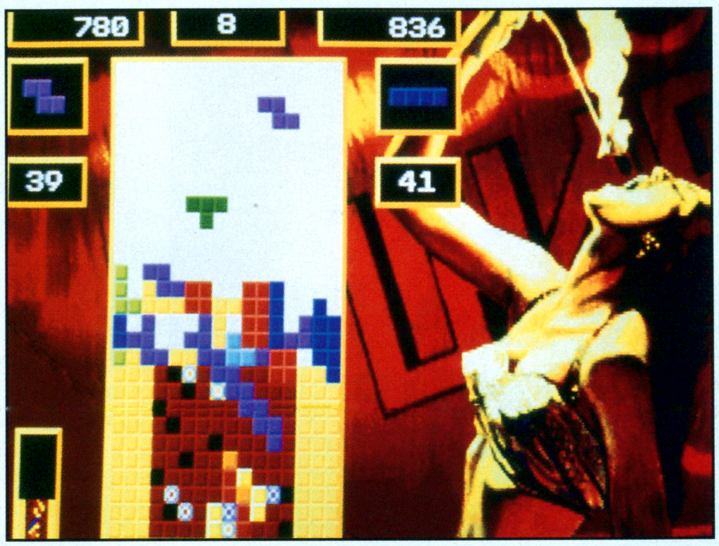
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

People have said that *Tetris* is the most addictive game in the world. If that's the case, those who have been staying up until the wee hours to play "just one more game" better avoid *Super Tetris* like a bird avoids a snake. It may seem impossible, but *Super Tetris* is even more habit forming than its popular predecessor.

Super Tetris adds several twists to an already outstanding computer game. First, the well into which the player's pieces fall is deeper than before—so deep, in fact, that it doesn't fit entirely on the screen. Besides the deeper well, several treasures have been added to the game, which, when dug up, help the player in various ways.

Although the well is deeper, when the game starts, the bottom is already filled in with blocks that the player clears out. As each row of this rubble is cleared away, a picture slowly rises from the bottom of the well. When the entire picture is revealed, the level is won, and the player can then move on to the next. Of course, with each succeeding level, the rubble gets tougher and tougher to remove. Also, the pieces fall faster, giving the player less time to decide where the pieces should go and how to juggle them into position.





***Super Tetris*, like its popular predecessor, will keep gamers glued to the computer's display for hours on end.**

As mentioned, there are treasures in the rubble that the player can dig up. Some of these prizes increase the number of pieces left to drop (which gives the player a better chance to clear the rubble), while others provide tools with which the player can remove pieces from the screen.

For example, the bubble treasure will, when released, rise to the water line, destroying all pieces it touches. (The water line is the dividing point between the player's blocks and the rubble.) Other tools remove a line of pieces, destroy all objects within a 3 x 3 grid, turn pieces into bombs the player can use to destroy other pieces, and more.

Like the original *Tetris*, when the player fills in rows, the rows are removed from the screen. With *Super Tetris*, however, when rows are removed, the player is also awarded bombs that can blast pieces from the well. The number of bombs awarded depends on the number of rows removed simultaneously. The bombs are important new features, because they allow the player to remove mistakes, as well as trigger the various treasures.

Super Tetris can be controlled via keyboard, joystick or mouse, but the last two are not recommended since both are awkward and clumsy methods. With the mouse, for example, it's difficult to position pieces precisely. The keyboard control is precise and simple, so much so that it's strange Spectrum HoloByte decided to support a joystick and mouse at all. There's simply no need for them in this game.

While *Super Tetris* is an absorbing contest in its one-player mode, there's something to be said for human-vs.-human game play, as well as cooperative play. The game offers both of these multiplayer modes. In cooperative and competitive play, the well is wider and two pieces fall simultaneously. In the head-to-head mode, two players can compete using two computers that are networked together or connected via a null-modem cable.

Super Tetris is an addictive sport that'll keep anyone glued to the computer's display for hours on end. Every gamer should have a copy, but those who have work to do better not unwrap the box.

—Clayton Walnum

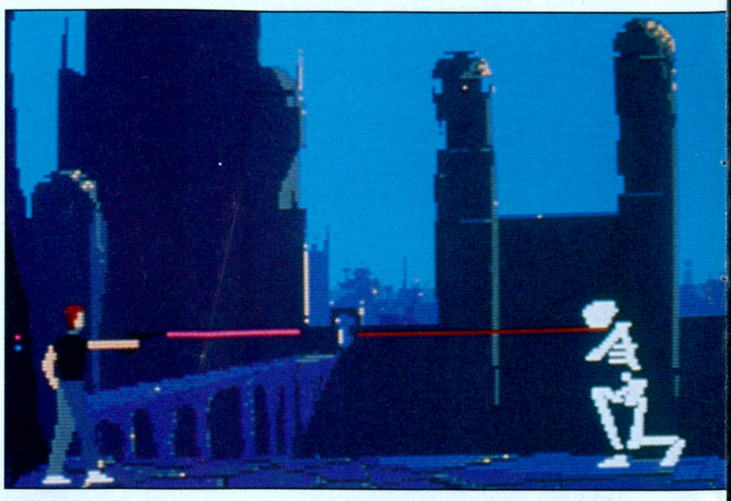
Spectrum HoloByte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 522-3584

Out of This World

INTERPLAY

Versions: Amiga ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10



It was a dark and stormy night. Lester Knight Chaykin, boy scientist, was hard at work on his latest nuclear experiment when a stray bolt of lightning struck the laboratory building, sending Lester off to another time, another dimension, another world. The player, as Lester, finds himself stranded on an alien planet with no apparent way home. Indeed, merely staying alive takes on a whole new priority.

Delphine Software, the folks behind *Future Wars, Cruise for a Corpse* and *Operation Stealth*, designed *Out of This World* with the same slick presentation and smooth animation that graced their earlier titles. A lot of games these days claim to let you "actually play the film," yet few actually deliver the experience. Even the legendary *Dragon's Lair* was little more than





***Out of This World* features flat polygonal graphics generating real-time rotoscoped animation.**

a glorified demo, filling six disks and featuring a whopping six minutes of actual game play. *Out of This World* comes on a mere two disks, yet allows the player far greater control over a scenario that plays out over nearly half an hour.

Out of This World wins points immediately by doing away with the infuriating "three lives—game over" business. Using a coded sectional restart system, it gives players as many chances as necessary to figure out how to get past the trickier segments. The action is straightforward and the level of difficulty increases gently, but wickedly.

Like *Prince of Persia*, to which it can be favorably compared, *Out of This World* features flat polygonal graphics generating real-time rotoscoped animation. The cinematic technique includes fluid zooms, pans and close-ups, all with accompanying music and sound effects.

After the two-and-a-half minute opening sequence, the player takes control of Lester and attempts to keep him alive in this strange new world. Carnivorous plants and poisonous slugs pose immediate danger, and, just as the player is about to become lunch for a huge bearlike beast, a pair of hooded aliens intervenes on his behalf, stunning both the creature and Lester. The player awakens caged, in the company of a fellow who, after a successful escape, becomes his steadfast companion.

By relieving a deceased guard of his pistol, the player gains a powerful and versatile weapon capable of generating a protective force field, a single-shot laser bolt and a devastating super blast. The gun holds a limited charge, and only experience will reveal whether you've wasted a shot on a door that could have been opened by other means. The aliens exhibit varying degrees of marksmanship and intelligence, and some can even be tricked into killing themselves! Control is simple, only a joystick is required, and many actions are performed automatically, allowing the player to concentrate on the truly essential movements.

Out of This World, an immensely appealing game loaded with atmosphere, represents everything a superior arcade adventure should be.

—Scott Wolf

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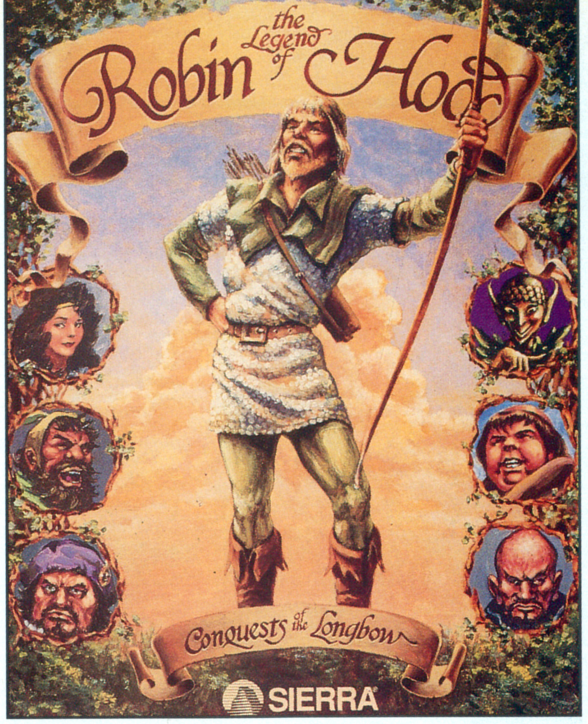
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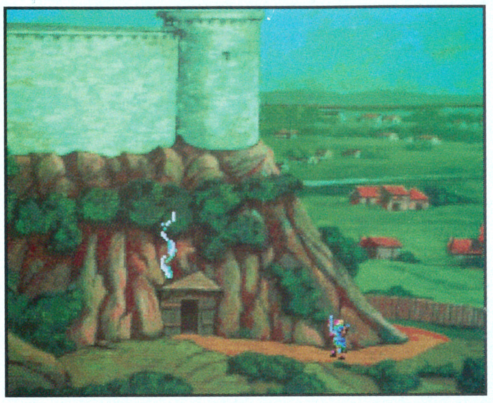
Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood

SIERRA ON-LINE
Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SOUND/MUSIC								■		
GRAPHICS									■	
PLAYABILITY									■	
OVERALL								■		



With two filmed versions of *Robin Hood* released in the same year, interest in Britain's most famous vigilante is at its highest level since Errol Flynn stopped making movies. Each filmed version tried with varying effort and success to mix legend with the available information on 15th-century Britain, which they often ignore, as shown by the inclusion of the Moor sidekick in the Kevin Costner film. Programmer Christy Marx, while clearly aware that she was creating an adventure based on a fictional character, worked to preserve historical accuracy whenever possible. Nevertheless, Sierra's *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood* still manages to be a game, not a term paper, with all of her research conveyed in the lushly animated illustrations and even in the characters' dialogue.



Because everything in the game occurs along a linear chronology, with a certain set of actions and adventures happening each day, play can often feel more like watching a movie than taking control of a character, even with the game's five possible endings. But it's a wonderful movie, with forests beautiful enough to make an environmental statement and characters with distinct expressions and humanlike movements. And the "aura" effects surrounding the magic are, in their own low-key manner, more stunning than any thunderbolts-and-lightning display.

Marx tries to give Robin control whenever possible. Players handle their own bow work, quarterstaff combat and other arcade sections, which may be automatically won by those who do not wish action to disrupt the storytelling. However, players will need to develop some skill with Nine Men's Morris, a simple strategy game popular in the Middle Ages, dating back to 1400 B.C.

Marx drew from Druid plant lore and gemology to add the right amount of magic to make the game mystical, without degenerating into a generic sword—or bow—and-sorcery game. Romance is predestined in dreams, the forests are filled with spirits and the sheep have wicked tongues.



While other games in this genre concentrate on puzzle solving or meaningless maze wandering, everything in *Conquests of the Longbow* has a subtle air of challenge.

While other games either concentrate on puzzle solving or meaningless maze wandering, everything in *Conquests of the Longbow* has a subtle air of challenge. Often while traveling, the key is not where to go, but how long to stay in a certain place. Players who rush away too soon from observation points and conversations will find themselves stranded. But then controlling a character whose head is wanted by every corrupt clergyman and soldier in Sherwood does not lend itself to tarrying.

With the exception of the names of saved games, typing is completely unnecessary, due to *Conquests*' icon-driven system. A two- or three-buttoned mouse is the ideal device to use, with one button choosing actions while the other determines the recipient/target/direction.

Sound boards add to the user's pleasure. Prerecorded sounds include medieval chanting, snoring and the thunk of an arrow hitting the tree in the outlaw's special target range.

Conversation is the key to advancing. Though the game's icon-driven play avoids the difficulties inherent in handling even the best parsers, it's truly amazing to see the range of messages players can send to encountered characters, using the following options: converse, touch, draw a weapon, or use/give any item. Marx made Robin a master of the backhanded compliment, as well as the outright insult.

Perhaps *Conquests*' greatest strength is its accessibility to players of various ages. The game is free of graphic violence, explicit sex and profanity, but Robin does kill, the romance is still exciting and, while the villains drink far too much, the heroes are not teetotalers either.

One doesn't need a fanatical interest in medieval England to enjoy *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood.* All the player needs is a longing for adventure in a place more real than any previously encountered in computer gaming.

—David S. Moskowitz

Sierra On-Line
40033 Sierra Way
Oakhurst, CA 93644
(209) 683-4468

Glider 4.0

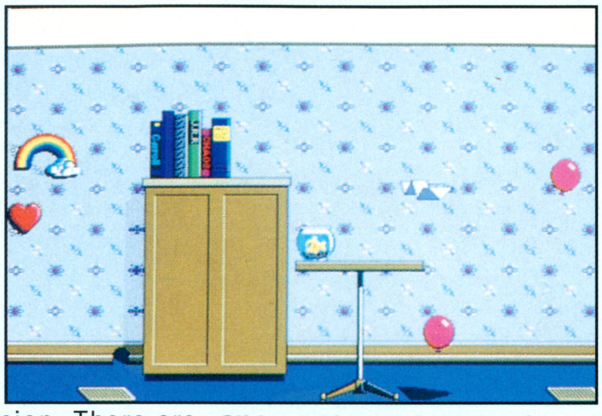
CASADY & GREENE INC.

Version: Macintosh ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10



Computers were supposed to eliminate the wasteful drudgery of handling modern society's seemingly endless glut of paper. Ironically, *Glider 4.0* from Casady & Greene is about a piece of artfully folded computer-generated paper that takes off as one of the most original arcade games of the year.



***Glider 4.0* has an ingeniously simple Zen-like feel that becomes increasingly intricate.**

All the action takes place in a spooky mansion. There are many rooms, including hallways, up and down staircases, plus secret passageways capable of warping the glider to unexpected locations. The graphics are magnificent. Each screen is so beautifully detailed and drawn (especially vibrant in color) that players may feel they're inside a painting come to life. Lightning, leaking water, plus other well done mood-altering sound effects add to the game's eccentric spirit.

The game begins with a fleet of four gliders. One glider hovers precariously in the first room. Since paper planes don't have engines, the glider will fall to the ground and become useless in a few seconds. Players must somehow overcome gravity and maneuver the glider from one room to another while avoiding hazardous objects. Flying through all the rooms and out of this eerie piece of real estate is the game challenge. What's a paper-glider pilot to do?

Fortunately, this old house has recently added extensive duct work for central air-conditioning and heating. By catching rising air and gaining altitude from strategically placed floor vents, gliders can thermal surf across rooms. Initially, children may have difficulty visualizing columns of rising air. A toggle-on feature that displays uplifting air as wavy lines gets the idea across.

Other means of glider support include hot air from candles (avoid getting too close) and finding energy batteries along the way that provide standby glider turbo power. Although there's usually more than one way to traverse a room, all but a few rooms require battery power.

To remain airborne, players must develop a knack for graceful control, precise timing and going with the air flow—this easygoing premise instills *Glider 4.0* with an ingeniously simple Zen-like feel that becomes increasingly intricate as gamers reach higher room numbers in the mansion.

Gliders can move forward or even slide backward. A reverse stall is often critical in reaching a battery or obtaining a jar of rubber bands (ammo for shooting down moving, enemy, dart-like gliders, balloons and swirling copters). Touching special objects with a glider earns bonus points, and points are awarded for making it across a room. Although not penalized for planning the next move while hovering over a vent, players may sacrifice time points given for speed.

A narrow menu status bar at the top of the screen indicates the name and room number, available battery energy, the amount of rubber bands in the arsenal and gliders in the squadron. Room names are fanciful or provide clues on how to get across the chamber.

Avoid contact with deadly electrical sockets, flying toast, paper shredders, jumping fish and other dangers too humorously gruesome to mention. Adding gliders is possible as the player progresses; no more gliders and the game is over. Explore everything, even areas that appear to be dead ends. Revealing any more would be equivalent to saying "the butler did it" and would spoil all the mysterious fun.

Glider 4.0 includes a comprehensive Room Editor that deserves a review all by itself. The editor allows players to plot out their own version of the game by designing a house full of rooms. Creating a well-balanced series of challenging rooms exposes the genius of the game. Keyboard and mouse manipulation provide the least amount of control over *Glider 4.0*. The MouseStick by Advanced Gravis offers the most maneuverability for high scores. Saved games, while good strategy for learning quickly, are not eligible for the high-score table; only a score achieved by a straight-through flight makes this list.

The manual is concise and clearly written, reflecting the brilliance of designer John Calhoun. Soaring high in the realm of inspired delight, the game appeals equally to children and CEOs. *Glider 4.0* is one "paper chase" worth every screen byte it's printed on.

—Maxwell Eden

Casady & Greene Inc.
22734 Portola Drive
Salinas, CA 93908
(408) 484-9228

Falcon 3.0a

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

Version: IBM PC ($79.95)

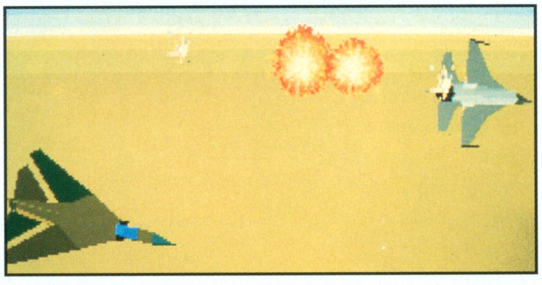
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



Spectrum HoloByte obviously put a great deal of time into producing the *Falcon 3.0* simulation. Aside from delaying its release by about a year, one month after its debut it issued a patch disk, version 3.0a, to fix the problems and enhance some capabilities.



An imposing soundtrack greets the player upon loading the game. This quickly fades away to a quiet forest scene. As a Mig roars overhead followed by a Falcon in close pursuit, a quick rush of adrenaline pumps through the player's body in anticipation of what is to come. The rest of the game is of the same quality as the opening animation, featuring superior sound and graphics and endless playing time.



The player makes choices about his computer configuration, squadron information and which area of the simulation to start in from the War Room screen. The pilot can choose to alter his configuration, view replays, enter communications mode, fly in Red Flag or activate a new squadron.



If a new pilot is antsy for fighting, he can choose Instant Action and be placed directly in the middle of a dogfight. All the controls and options are the same in this mode, except the pilot has no wingman and begins and ends play in the air. The sole object is to destroy every plane and ground target in sight. Normally the player has unlimited weapons and fuel, so the only limit to the game's length is how long a pilot can survive.

The Red Flag option lets the rookie pilot get used to his aircraft without any serious harm. The squadron is placed in Nevada where several lessons can be taken, or lessons can be customized and constructed by the player. As the pilot trains, the computer enhances his abilities in the area he trains in.

The game really begins when the player forms a squadron and heads for a combat theater. The war zones are Kuwait, Panama and Israel. A map shows how much of the combat zone is occupied by the enemy and how much is friendly. Based on this, the squadron must adjust its missions to the type of fighting needed in the current situation. If the enemy is losing ground, then the squadron stays on the offensive and tries to cut into enemy forces. If the allies are losing, the squadron's missions are defensive. Whereas in other simulations the pilots' actions don't have much bearing on the outcome of the war, in *Falcon* the outcome depends largely on the actions of the player.

A new player should be warned: The first several missions will not be survived. It takes a bit of playing to learn how to avoid SAMs and enemy aircraft. Even after several hours of play it's difficult to survive a mission.

The biggest qualm with the game is the air cover provided by wingmen and allies. It is almost nil. A wingman rarely survives a mission, and no friends drop in to help when the pilot needs it most. Fortunately, the number of fighters in the flight and the amount of flights in each mission can be altered to shift the balance of power. Increasing the number of fighters per mission increases the chances of success, but also increases fatigue and decreases the supplies in squadron.

The game supports two-player tandem or head-to-head modes via modem or Novell network. (No other networks are supported at this point.) Spectrum HoloByte also downgraded network play from six to two players with version 3.0a. Hopefully, a newer version will correct this.

The game supports all major sound cards. Speech is incorporated throughout if the player owns a Sound Blaster, but expanded memory is necessary to utilize sound and graphics completely. The terrain throughout the game is spectacular (check out the canyon in the southeast corner of Red Flag), although a 486, or 386 with a co-processor, is necessary for full effect.

This is the best combat flight simulation to date. It requires more devotion to maneuvering, strategy and aeronautical skills than any previous simulator. Players should be prepared to spend a significant amount of time learning the F-16 completely.

The graphics are stunning, the sound is incredible and the game play is a rush. I highly recommend *Falcon 3.0a* to any armchair military pilot.

—David Ethel

Spectrum HoloByte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 522-3584



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CIRCLE #134 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Becoming a Contender in 4-D Boxing

ELECTRONIC ARTS
Version: IBM PC

COMPUTER STRATEGIES

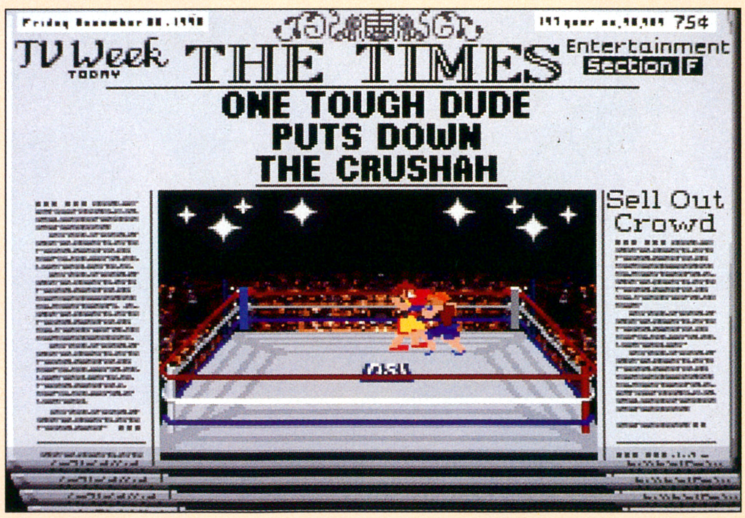
To excel at *4-D Boxing*, a player must turn a created boxer into a world champion. The boxer starts with a rank of 51; it takes training, as well as effective boxing, to become number one in the world.

A fighter has up to 45 fights before his time is up. The boxer starts to tire after 35 fights, so it is important to fight the Champ before that. There are 50 boxers, so obviously a pugilist cannot fight everyone before retiring. It takes a move up of at least two spots in the ranking every fight so that the contender can face the Champ before the end of his career.

There are two ways to win a fight, either by a knockout or by landing the most punches. The first 15 or 20 boxers are easy to knock out in the first or early second round. A player just has to overwhelm these fighters with punches. When the bell rings, move directly across the ring and use a combination of body blows to weaken the computer boxer. When the boxer is about to fade, a hook or a series of hooks will quickly put the pugilist to the canvas.

This strategy is sound for the first 20 or, if lucky, the first 25 boxers. Soon after that, players get their lights knocked out. Boxers who have defenses other than putting their face or body in front of punches will become the opponents. For that reason, the first 20 boxers should be treated as sparring partners and not just as punching bags. A player must develop many different techniques to be successful. Test different combinations of punches and, equally important, try different defenses. Take a few punches, try to block them, and then practice stepping back out of the other boxer's reach and shaking out the cobwebs. On the offensive, practice different combinations and get a good feel of how close boxers have to be for effective punches. When facing the better boxers, few fighters will be able to win by a knockout, especially early in the fight.



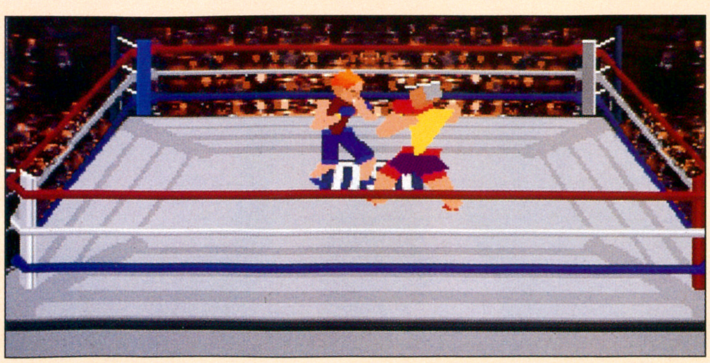


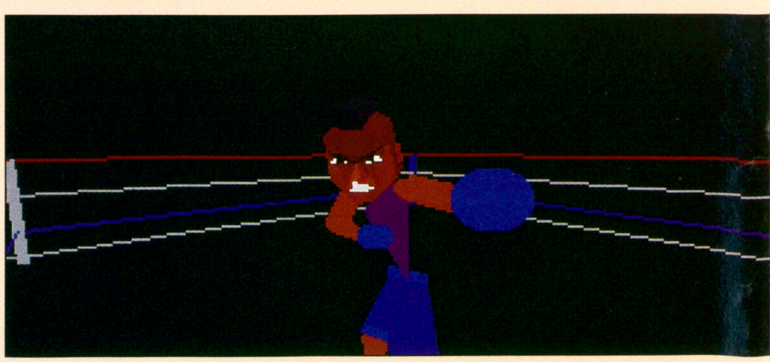
A good strategy when faced with the better boxers is to throw a jab and then step back. When the boxer comes in range, throw another jab and step back again. But do not get caught in the corners; slowly circle around the outside part of the ring. The boxer's path should look like a square with the corners rounded. This strategy works against every boxer except the Champ.

There is no simple strategy to take care of the Champ. The player's boxer gets thrown back when hit by this monster. The Champ cannot be overwhelmed by the power of the player's punches, nor will the strategy of jabbing and evading be effective. The Champ doesn't hesitate when hit by these light punches; he closes the gap and pummels his opponent. A player has to have a well-rounded fighting technique to be successful. An effective mix of power punches and knowledge of when to step back and defend is the only way to successfully challenge the Champ.

As in the real world of professional boxing, the only secret to success is practice and more practice. A well-trained pugilist can work his way up the ranks and someday be prolaimed champion of the world.

—David Ethel

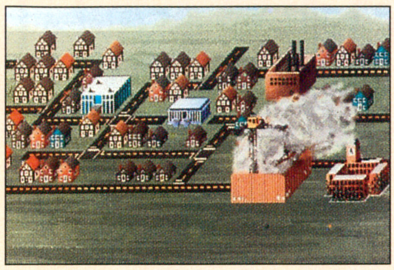




How to Advance Civilization

MICROPROSE
Version: IBM PC

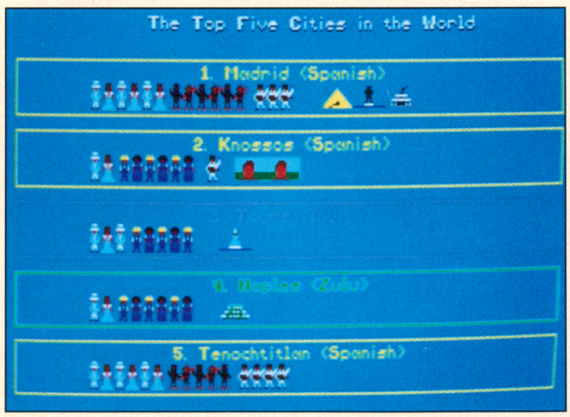




Sid Meier's games never lend themselves to a "universal" strategy that allows the player to win every time. *Civilization* (like Meier's last game, *Railroad Tycoon*) is designed with multiple layers of difficulty and an endless variety of starting positions to allow maximum replay value. All a player can really hope to do is recognize some of the important concepts and potential pitfalls that exist for those who seek to build a civilization that will withstand the test of time.

Time is of the essence, particularly early in the game when it leaps along in 20-year increments. The initial Settler unit should build a city as soon as possible to begin production of other units. The first priority should be to defend this holding, so begin production of the strongest military unit available (usually militia) and fortify the first two produced in the city. The next two or three should fan out in exploration of the surrounding area, finding resources for new city sites, making contact with other civilizations and looking for village icons. The latter are beneficial 75% of the time, yielding scrolls of ancient wisdom (technological advances) and valuable mineral deposits (money in the bank), or supporting an advanced tribe, which will immediately form a new city in the empire. The other 25% of the time, entering a village will unleash a horde of barbarians who must be subsequently conquered. Thus, through early and far-reaching exploration, one can gain a jump on a lot of the other civilizations by finding villages first.





When other civilizations are encountered in the early stages, it is best to make peace (unless they are positioned at a geographical choke point that precludes further expansion in any direction). This allows a consolidation of one's position prior to any risk-taking. Also, peaceful exchange of knowledge may allow several civilization advances to be gained, whereas conquest of a group only allows the selection of one of their technologies for implementation.

Once the first military units are deployed, players should build a maximum of two Settler units to develop new cities in choice resource areas that the exploring units discover. Immediately thereafter, begin domestic improvements in the home city (build barracks, granaries, temples, etc.) to keep the populace happy. Domestically, city walls are a great enhancement (though costly), as they significantly add to the defensive factor of the city. The other new cities can be used for production of additional military units to smite invaders and continue expansion as necessary. Once the first three cities are beginning to prosper, build additional Settler units to develop roads, agricultural improvements, mines, etc., in their vicinity, thereby increasing the economic base. With a good base of tax dollars it is possible to "buy" units in production without having to wait for them, thereby increasing one's ability to expand or wage war.

By this time, the destruction of one or two other civilizations (assuming a game with seven civilizations) will have occurred. Their conqueror's should be avoided for now, if at all possible. If one has contact with another civilization at this point, it is a good time to go to war and build one's own city base. After the conflict is joined, any subsequent offers of peace with knowledge or money concessions should be accepted; then, go right back after the weakened opponent next turn. More can be gained in this manner than through straight conquest and plundering.

Conquering the world is only one way to win the game, and it isn't easy (just ask any of the great dictators in history). The other method of winning is to put the first colonists in space. Even if one is beaten by one of the other civilizations, it is possible to end up in the hall of fame for surviving the ages. Remember that civilizations receive points for years of peace, percentage of happy citizenry, technological achievements and building "Wonders of the World." The latter are big-ticket items, and possession of them through conquest does not count toward the total, so don't neglect building them when the situation permits. It is usually not best to spread these projects among the cities. Instead, concentrate them in the most productive city of the realm, after it has been adequately defended, of course.

Managing the myriad requirements associated with demagoguery is never easy, but if it was, it wouldn't be half as much fun!

—Ed Dille



From Fan to Pro

BY
ARNIE KATZ

I've gotten several letters in recent months, all asking the same thing: How can I break into electronic-gaming journalism? I'll cover this in some depth in next month's *Inside Gaming* column, but there's one aspect that probably belongs right here in *Fandango*.

I'd recommend that many of the people who'd like to review games for money consider starting in the pages of electronic-gaming fanzines. Competition is fierce for journalistic openings, both staff and free-lance, and editors reserve their warmest welcome for writers with a decent track record. In other words, if you show that you know how to critique a computer or video game properly, it improves the chances that eventually you'll receive similar work for hard cash.

The best way to get started is to write to the fanzines that you find most interesting, enclosing one or more sample reviews and offering your services. Fanzine editors are always hungry for well-written, incisive material. Collect all your printed fanzine writing in a folder. When it's time to query a professional magazine, that file of work could spell the difference between landing an assignment or a turndown.

Circuit City Report #5

Danny Han and Terrence Yee
P.O. Box 240523
Honolulu, HI 96824-0523
$1.95—Frequent
12 pages

Prospective writers, as well as readers, should check out this newsletter-style publication devoted to the Amiga, IBM PC and Genesis. The layout is crisp and well-organized, and the editors obviously know what they're doing.

ATTENTION
Fanzine Readers

If you want to get better acquainted with electronic-gaming fandom, one good way is to send for the free current fanzine list. This contains the names, addresses, prices and brief descriptions of dozens of current electronic-gaming fanzines. You can obtain the list by writing to Arnie Katz (see *Megagaming* address, right) and sending a self-addressed stamped envelope.

The current issue presents news, letters and tips, plus lengthy reviews of six games. The prose style is a little gung ho, but you can't blame this energetic tandem for letting their enthusiasm spill over into their writing. *Circuit City Report* could use a little more of its editors' personalities, but it's definitely one fanzine worth reading.

The Atari Zone Vol. 4, No. 1

Daniel M. Iacovelli
No address listed
No listed price—No frequency listed
12 pages

This 2600, 5200, 6800 and Lynx newsletter is the official organ of the Atari Video Club, a 16-member aggregation that traces its origin back to 1988. Despite this history, *The Atari Zone* is prone to neofanish mistakes. For example, there's no colophon (with the fanzine's address, price and frequency), and the text needs tightening and spell checking. It's good to see a letter column, but why waste space by signing each editorial reply? These are highly correctable problems, of course, and Dan seems like the kind of fanzine editor who'll fix them in a hurry.

News notes, an editorial commemorating the club's fourth anniversary, letters, tips and short reviews adequately fill this issue. *The Atari Zone* will improve rapidly when its editor has had a chance to study style and presentation a little more closely.

MegaForce #6

A.J. Ramos
33022 Lake Huron St.
Fremont, CA 94555
$5—Bimonthly
14 pages

Here's a good example of what an electronic-gaming fan can do with some enthusiasm, ingenuity and a bit of artistic talent. This eye-catching fanzine is aimed at 16-bit video gamers, though it also covers the NES and Game Boy.

The illustrations give *MegaForce* an inviting appearance, though the editor may want to cut back on company logos in future issues. Perhaps A.J. can develop his own signature character, too, rather than appropriating copyrighted ones like Bart Simpson.

Like most fanzines, news and reviews are the main attraction, although there's also the start of what could develop into a lively letter column. I'd like to see A.J. step out front a little more and give us some of his opinions about games and gaming. *MegaForce* is still improving, and that makes it a fanzine worth a try.

Raw Current #3

Leo Dolan and Jason Cross
2102 Tanbark Lane
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312
$1.50—Frequent
16 pages

A strategy guide to *Super Mario World* and reviews take center stage in this sprightly fanzine that mixes humor with its information. I strongly disagree with the editorial, which counsels would-be fanzine editors to forget it, but it's good to see well-presented viewpoints of any stripe. I can even forgive the editors' complaints about making only a small profit on what is, after all, a hobby, because they're rapidly propelling *Raw Current* to the upper echelon of gaming fanzines.

MEGAGAMING

The biweekly "Voice of Electronic Gaming," produced by Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley, contains news and commentary with a behind-the-scenes perspective. Among its many features are reviews of current fanzines and an advice column for fanzine editors. For a three-issue trial subscription, send $5 to *Megagaming*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

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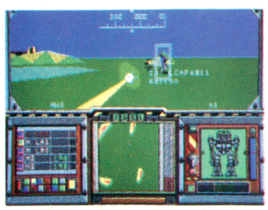


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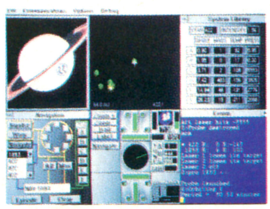
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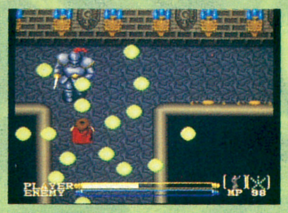
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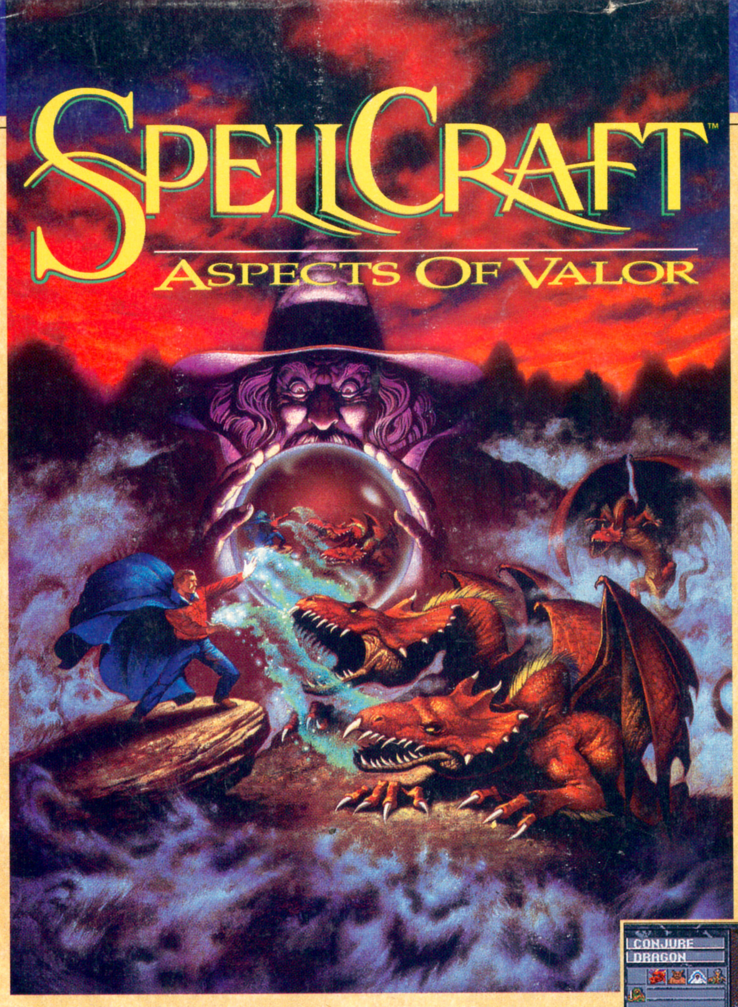
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